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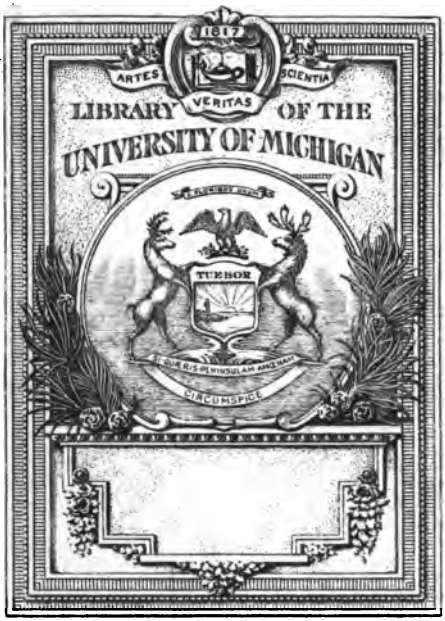
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ESSAYS,

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AND

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Eſt quiddam, quod ſuâ vi nos alliciat ad ſeſe, non emolumento captans aliquo, ſed trahens ſuâ dignitate: quod genus virtus, ſcientia, veritas eſt.

CICERO.

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ERRATA.

Page 23, line 29, *for* combination, *read* combinations.
— 39, — 8, *dele* the whole line.
— 83, — 17, *for* quickly, *r.* quietly.
— 98, — 15, — not be, *r.* be not.
— 178, — 21, — preserved, *r.* erected.
— 221, — 20, — Selemaque, *r.* Telemaque.
— 243, — 30, — migh, *r.* might.
— 250, — 27, — imbibe, *r.* indeed.
— 255, — 13, — irriseftible, *r.* irresistible.
— 256, — 21, — seecond, *r.* second.
— 264, — 5, after education? I cannot, &c.
— 356, — 16, 29, *for* rigicides, *r.* regicides.
— 364, — 17, *for* hypotheſis, *r.* hypotheſes.

ESSAYS,

PHILOSOPHICAL, HISTORICAL,

&c. &c. &c.

V

ESSAY I.

On LIBERTY *and* NECESSITY.

THE celebrated controverſy on the ſubject of Liberty and Neceſſity has, from the earlieſt ages and in various modes, attracted the attention and employed the ſagacity of philoſophical and ſpeculative minds. Whether the courſe of human events is fixed and unalterable, or uncertain and contingent, is a queſtion in the higheſt degree curious and intereſting, but at the ſame time involved in difficulties of ſuch magnitude, that it may be juſtly doubted whether it is capable of a ſolution ſo clear and ſatisfactory, as to preclude a difference of opinion on this ſubject, amongſt enquirers equally candid, impartial, and intelligent. In modern times, indeed, the controverſy has aſſumed a more regular and ſcientific form; and

the utmoſt force of the human underſtanding has been exerted, the utmoſt powers of ratiocination diſplayed by the advocates on each ſide, in their attempts to eſtabliſh or confirm their reſpective ſyſtems: yet the queſtion does not ſeem to approach to a deciſion, and the greateſt names in the republic of letters are ſtill divided in opinion on this important point. Perhaps it may afford ſome amuſement to thoſe who do not poſſeſs leiſure or inclination to toil through the numerous volumes to which this controverſy has given birth, to view, in a ſmall compaſs, the principal arguments on each ſide, expreſſed in eaſy and intelligible terms: by which means they will be enabled to form a general idea of the nature of this famous controverſy, and be in ſome degree qualified to form a judgment reſpecting it. Firſt then, the Neceſſarian writers (amongſt whom Hume, Hobbes, Collins, Liebnitz, Hutcheſon, Edwards, Hartley, Prieſtley, and perhaps Locke, are to be claſſed), ſtrenuouſly maintain, that the courſe of human events is abſolutely fixed and unalterable, and that nothing could poſſibly, or at leaſt without a change in the fundamental laws of the univerſe, take place, otherwiſe than as it is, has been, or is to be. This, they affirm, is not merely a probable concluſion, but a concluſion demonſtrably reſulting from the following conſiderations:— Whatever begins to exiſt, muſt have an adequate cauſe of its exiſtence; for, if the ſmalleſt particle of duſt, or the moſt tranſient emotion of the mind,

mind, could come into exiſtence without a cauſe, it is evident that the whole univerſe, and all the inhabitants it contains, might alſo exiſt without a cauſe: and conſequently, it would be impoſſible to prove the exiſtence of the great and original Cauſe of all things. This primary truth, then, being eſtabliſhed, they aſſert further, that the ſame cauſes in the ſame circumſtances muſt produce exactly the ſame effects; this axiom being conſonant to all the phœnomena of nature, and indeed the baſis and foundation of all juſt philoſophy. To affirm that the ſame cauſes do not in the ſame circumſtances produce invariably the ſame effects, is in reality to aſſert that a cauſe of exiſtence is not abſolutely neceſſary; for, if nothing in the cauſe correſponds to the variation in the effect, that variation exiſts without a cauſe; conſequently this truth is equally incontrovertible with the firſt: and they proceed with confidence to a third propoſition, neceſſarily reſulting from the two former, viz. that a man in any given ſituation muſt form certain or definite volitions or determinations; for, if nothing exiſts without a cauſe, and the ſame cauſes in the ſame circumſtances produce the ſame effects, the volitions referred to muſt have had a cauſe, and the cauſe which was adequate to the production of thoſe volitions, was inadequate to the production of any other than thoſe; for a variation in the volitions would neceſſarily imply a variation in the cauſe. From hence it follows, by eaſy and

irrefragable deduction, that in every poſſible ſituation in which a human or thinking being can be placed, his volitions muſt be determinate and certain: that the volitions of all mankind are ſo, and finally, that as every event comes to paſs in conſequence of cauſes previouſly exiſting, the whole ſeries of events is under the influence of an abſolute and uncontrollable Neceſſity. Again, it is urged as an undeniable matter of fact, by this claſs of metaphyſicians, that no volition ever takes place in the mind without ſome motive: as this propoſition is too plain to be called in queſtion, it muſt be allowed, that when different motives preſent themſelves to the imagination, the mind will be invariably influenced by the ſtronger motive; conſequently the volition muſt be in the ſtricteſt ſenſe neceſſary. The preſcience of the Divine Being affords alſo a collateral argument of the greateſt weight in ſupport of the doctrine of Neceſſity; for, if future events are, in their own nature, uncertain and contingent, Omniſcience itſelf cannot ſee them to be otherwiſe than they actually are; and it is a groſs and palpable contradiction to aſſert, that God can with abſolute certainty foretell that a particular event ſhall take place; and at the ſame time to affirm, that the event foretold depends upon the free-will of man for its accompliſhment, if the determinations of the will are themſelves lawleſs and uncertain.

To

To theſe very powerful and cogent argu- arguments the advocates for philoſophical liberty, viz. Clarke, Beattie, Butler, Price, Law, Bryant, Wollaſton, Horſley, &c. reply to the following purpoſe:—As all mankind have an internal conſciouſneſs of freedom, and as it is impoſſible for any metaphyſical ſubtilties ſo totally to overpower the original and genuine dictates of nature, as to excite a real belief in the mind of any rational being that he is not maſter of his own actions, but that he is a mere machine, and as incapable of controlling the events of his life, or the determinations of his will, as a puppet to reſiſt the impulſe of the wires by which he is put in motion, it might ſeem ſufficient to appeal to common ſenſe for the refutation of aſſertions ſo extravagant and abſurd; but in order more completely to expoſe the fallacy and detect the ſophiſtry of thoſe arguments by which their antagoniſts attempt to reaſon men out of their reaſon, it is proper, ſay they, to enter into a more full and accurate inveſtigation of them; and with reſpect to the ſo much boaſted argument from the neceſſary operation of cauſes and effects, they profeſs their readineſs to acknowledge the neceſſity of a cauſe to the production of any effect, but they can by no means admit the application of this axiom to the ſupport of the hypotheſis in queſtion, nor by any means allow that motives are to be conſidered as the efficient cauſes of volition: The man alone is the agent, and forms the volition, upon the view and conſideration of motives indeed

which may be, and uſually are, the occaſion of the volition, but which cannot with any degree of propriety be ſtiled the impellers or the true and phyſical cauſes of it. To ſet this propoſition in a clearer light, they obſerve, that amongſt other wonderful and incomprehenſible powers with which it has pleaſed God to endow the human mind, is the faculty of ſelf-determination, of beginning motion, of putting itſelf in action; and though no reaſonable perſon will exert this power in a total diſregard to motives, yet muſt the power indiſputably be allowed to exiſt independent of the motive; and ſhould two different volitions be ſuppoſed to take place in the ſame preciſe ſituation, they cannot ſurely, with any ſhadow of juſtice, be repreſented as exiſting without any adequate cauſe, when the ſelf-determining power is itſelf the cauſe of each volition.

In various inſtances the different motives preſented to the mind appear equally forcible: at other times we cannot with the utmoſt attention perceive our minds to be influenced, previous to the act of chuſing, by any motive whatever, to a definite choice. In ſuch caſes can any one be ſo abſurd as to imagine that the man is not at liberty to act at all. Has not a man a power of walking, becauſe he is not incited by any particular motive to turn either to the right or to the left? Or is a traveller incapable of proceeding to the place of his deſtination till he has come to a formal determination whether the ſhorter and rougher, or the farther

farther and eaſier road will be more eligible? No; doubtleſs he has a power of inſtant determination, notwithſtanding the impoſſibility of aſcertaining the preponderance, or even the exiſtence of any motive which could in any manner influence the volition. Even in thoſe caſes where the preponderance of any motive is viſible and notorious, no man can truly ſay that the action conſequent upon it was, ſtrictly ſpeaking, neceſſary: for great as the weight of the motive may be ſuppoſed, if it was not actually of a violent or compulſive kind, the ſelf-determining power might have decided in oppoſition to that, or any other motive whatever.—So that the weakneſs and fallacy of that reaſoning muſt be apparent to every unprejudiced enquirer, by which it is pretended, that the mind will be neceſſarily and invariably influenced by the ſtrongeſt motive. In the multifarious and eventful buſineſs of life it perpetually happens, that the mind is agitated and perplexed by a conflict of oppoſite and contending motives; and we too frequently find virtue and reaſon ranged on one ſide, paſſion and inclination on the other. In this unhappy ſituation what is to be done? Are men quietly and paſſively to ſubmit to the ſtrong and violent impulſe of paſſion, and refuſe to liſten to the ſtill and feeble call of reaſon? No; they muſt exert their own inherent power of ſelf-determination, and form their reſolutions in ſpite of the ſuperior force of thoſe inclinations which they know to be highly culpable and unworthy. If it is ſufficient to ſay, in

vindication of a vicious action, that the motives which influenced us to the perpetration of it were at the time predominant in the mind, no villainy could ever want an adequate apology; the very foundations of virtue would be ſubverted, the ideas of virtue and vice would be totally confounded, and the moral character of the Deity himſelf, as the author of a conſtitution of things which neceſſarily and inevitably led to the commiſſion of every ſpecies of immorality, would be highly reflected upon, and moſt injuriouſly, not to ſay profanely traduced, and miſrepreſented. And in regard to the collateral argument deduced from the divine preſcience, it may be ſaid, in the language of ſcripture, that as the heavens are high above the earth, ſo are God's ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts; and it would be moſt unreaſonable and preſumptuous to expect that men ſhould be able to comprehend or explain the mode in which the divine attributes exiſt or operate. We know by intuition, as well as induction, that the will of man is free; and we know, by the accompliſhment of prophecies, as well as by the expreſs claims and declarations of the Divine Being, that all futurity lies open to his immenſe ſurvey: and theſe truths, if ſeparately proved, muſt undoubtedly be conſiſtent with each other, however inconſiſtent or irreconcilable they may appear to our weak and limited capacities. But even if it ſhould be allowed that the free-will of man, and the fore-knowledge of Deity, when underſtood in its utmoſt latitude, are expreſs contra-

contradictions, it would ſurely be much leſs derogatory to the honour and glory of Almighty God, to acknowledge that the attribute of preſcience is not, abſolutely and ſtrictly ſpeaking, without limitation; than to aſſert the exiſtence of it in ſuch a ſenſe as to imply the impoſſibility of imparting to man freedom of agency, the glorious and ineſtimable privilege of ſelf-determination. If it is in the nature of things impoſſible, that the attribute of preſcience can ſubſiſt in its fulleſt extent, without depriving men of that faculty which can alone render them moral or accountable agents, with profound ſubmiſſion and reverence we may venture to affirm, that in this ſenſe, and to this extent, it does not ſubſiſt; though doubtleſs that Almighty Being, to whom all hearts are open and all deſires known, cannot fail to judge, with a degree of preciſion to us wholly incomprehenſible, concerning the effects which will ariſe from cauſes actually exiſting. His foreſight extends to every poſſible contingency, and his power and wiſdom will infallibly make every event ſubſervient to the moſt glorious and ſalutary purpoſes.

The Neceſſarians, far from being ſilenced by theſe popular and ſpecious reaſonings, with great ardour and confidence thus reſume the argument:——It is acknowledged, ſay they, by our opponents, then, that nothing can come into exiſtence without a cauſe. All the affections, emotions, and feelings of the mind, however modified and however diſtinguiſhed, are the real and genuine effects of ſome

real

real and adequate cauſe. The queſtion therefore to be decided is this, "Whether thoſe mental affections are produced by a regular concatenation of circumſtances or motives operating as real and adequate cauſes, or whether they are the reſult of a certain faculty of the mind fortunately diſcovered for this very purpoſe, and dignified with the appellation of the ſelf-determining power." He who affirms that the ſelf-determining power is the cauſe of volition, muſt doubtleſs intend to convey ſome farther idea than that the power by which our volitions are determined is the cauſe of volition; for this is a mere identical propoſition, which can never be ſeriouſly propoſed as the ſubject of philoſophical diſcuſſion. —By the ſelf-determining power therefore muſt be meant, if indeed it has any meaning, either the actual exertion of volition, or the mental energy which precedes volition, and which is the efficient cauſe of it. If it means the actual exertion of volition, then the aſſertors of this power evidently confound the cauſe with the effect, making the act of volition prior to itſelf, diſtinct from itſelf, and the cauſe of itſelf. But if it means the mental energy preceding and producing volition, it is then plainly equivalent to the *term motive*, and the queſtion is reduced to a mere verbal controverſy; for this mental energy, denoting only a particular diſpoſition and ſtate of mind, muſt itſelf have reſulted from a previous diſpoſition of mind, as likewiſe that previous diſpoſition from one yet more remote:—a regular and uninterrupted concatenation of volitions thus

thus extending itſelf backwards to the original ſource of agency, each volition or mental ſtate, like wave impelling wave, ariſing from preceding, and giving riſe to ſucceeding ſtates or definite ſituations of mind analogous to itſelf, and correſponding to thoſe immutable laws by which the mental no leſs than the material world is governed by infinite wiſdom and power.—But the *term motive*, according to the Neceſſarian definition, includes all thoſe previous circumſtances which contribute to produce a definite volition or determination of the will.—To what purpoſe then attempt to diſtinguiſh between the power and the motive of determination, when the ideas preciſely coincide; the definite cauſe of a definite volition being all which is really meant by either?—Or where is the difference between the Libertarian, who ſays that the mind chuſes the motive; and the Neceſſarian, who aſſerts that the motive determines the mind; if the volition be the neceſſary reſult of all the previous circumſtances?—The diſtinction in this caſe can only amount to an idle and trifling evaſion; and it is evident, that in order to preſerve a ſhadow of liberty, its advocates make no ſcruple to adopt a groſs impropriety of expreſſion: to boaſt, that the mind chuſes the motive when the mind is reſtricted to a definite choice, is ridiculous; and it is in fact as great a ſoleciſm, as to affirm that the volition chuſes the motive: for the choice of the mind is not prior, but ſubſequent to the motive; it is therefore not the cauſe, but the effect of the motive; and this pretended mental choice

choice is manifeſtly neither more nor leſs than the neceſſary determination of volition.

After this, it is needleſs to enlarge upon the abſurdity of the idea, that this pretended power is capable of deciding in contradiction to the moſt powerful motive; for if it is conſidered as the real and proper cauſe of volition, its deciſions muſt be definite and certain; and it is perfectly ridiculous to apply the term moſt powerful to that motive which is not actually prevalent. For the ſake of argument, we have admitted the exiſtence of a power in the mind, the reality of which, as diſtinguiſhed from the power of motives, it is impoſſible to eſtabliſh by even the ſhadow of a proof; but if it really exiſted, it is evident it could exiſt only as the cauſe of volition in general; for, ſo far as it is not biaſſed and influenced by motives, ſo far it bears an exactly equal relation to each particular volition; and therefore cannot poſſibly be the cauſe of any ſpecific determination; juſt as matter endowed with a ſimilar power of ſelf-motion would remain for ever inert, in conſequence of its poſſeſſing an equal tendency to move in every poſſible direction at the ſame inſtant of time. So far as it is an independent principle, therefore, it is a nugatory and uſeleſs one. But even if it could be proved the true and proper cauſe of every particular volition, ſtill we inſiſt that the volitions produced by it muſt be certain and definite; for it will ever remain an incontrovertible axiom, notwithſtanding all metaphyſical refinements and ſubtleties, that the ſame cauſe

cauſe in the ſame preciſe circumſtances muſt inevitably produce the ſame effects.—To appeal to the internal feelings and conſciouſneſs of mankind, as the advocates for liberty affect to do in confirmation of their principles, will avail them little: the only ſpecies of liberty that any man is or can be conſcious of, is a liberty or power of voluntary agency, or of acting as he pleaſes or wills; and this is a power which we are ſo far from conteſting, that we conſider it as an eſſential part of the Neceſſarian ſyſtem. The fact is, that the queſtion ſo much conteſted among philoſophers, viz. *Whether volitions are definite in definite circumſtances*, never occurs to the generality of mankind; and, if it were ſtated, would not be underſtood: To philoſophers only, then, let the appeal be made; and ſurely every attentive and impartial examiner muſt be compelled to anſwer in the affirmative.

As to the immoral and pernicious conſequences which our adverſaries pretend to deduce from Neceſſarian principles, it is eaſy to ſhow, that they are founded in a groſs miſapprehenſion of their nature and tendency. The philoſophical idea of Liberty will not indeed be included in the Neceſſarian definition of virtue, but it will ſtill remain as diſtinct from and oppoſite to vice, as excellent in itſelf, and as much the object of love and admiration, as it can poſſibly be upon any hypotheſis whatever. To incite us to the practice of it, and to deter us from the commiſſion of vice, motives muſt, agreeably to the frame and conſtitution of the human

human mind, be held out to our view; peace and happineſs be annexed to the one, ſhame and miſery to the other; and theſe aſſociations once implanted in the mind, muſt produce the moſt beneficial effects; and the importance of early inculcating juſt ſentiments, and of urging men to the practice of virtue, by every laudable motive, cannot appear in ſo ſtriking and important a light upon any other ground, as on that which aſcribes to them a certain and invariable operation. That objection to the doctrine of Neceſſity, which charges it with involving the character of the Supreme Being in the guilt of moral turpitude, is an accuſation equally weak and ill-founded. If the Deity acts immorally in decreeing vicious actions, how can our adverſaries, upon their own principles, vindicate God's moral government, in permitting thoſe irregularities which he could ſo eaſily have prevented. The truth is, the difficulty is the very ſame on each and indeed every hypotheſis; and the Neceſſarians are under no peculiar obligation to ſolve that great problem, the introduction of evil into the univerſe: however, as we have the moſt convincing proofs, derived both from reaſon and revelation, of the moral attributes of Deity, we may ſurely reſt ſatisfied that very wiſe and important ends are to be anſwered by it; and we may ſafely conclude, that all things ſhall finally terminate in pure and perfect happineſs; and that the power, wiſdom, and goodneſs of God ſhall be at length fully diſplayed, and illuſ-

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triouſly vindicated. It is farther obſervable, that the conſequences flowing from the ſyſtem of Neceſſity, and which appear to the aſſertors of free-will ſo alarming and dreadful, are light and trivial, when compared with thoſe which muſt neceſſarily reſult from the denial of the Divine preſcience; which may be ſaid to wreſt the ſceptre from the hand of the Creator, and to place that capricious and undefinable principle, the ſelf-determining power of man, upon the throne of the univerſe. If the abſolute foreknowledge of God is admitted, every one muſt ſee that contingency is excluded; and conſequently the whole fabric reared upon the ſhallow and viſionary baſis of man's free agency, muſt inſtantly diſſolve; "and, like an inſubſtantial pageant faded, leave "not a wreck behind."

ESSAY II.

On SHAKESPEARE.

IT appears paradoxical, but it is ſtrictly true, that the faults of Shakeſpeare, great and numerous as his warmeſt advocates muſt allow them to be, afford the moſt deciſive proofs of his excellence. It is an acknowledged fact, that to his works all claſſes of men, the young and the old, the learned and the ignorant, the clown and the courtier, are indebted for the moſt exquiſite entertainment and delight; and yet, what rule of compoſition can be named which he has not violated; what ſpecies of impropriety, from which he is entirely exempt? How tranſcendent, then, muſt be the merit of that writer, how ſtriking the luſtre of thoſe beauties, which have power to excite ſuch delightful emotions, under ſuch diſadvantages, and combined with ſuch defects? It is a ſubject of liberal curioſity to enquire into the nature of thoſe beauties, and in what manner they concur, to produce this extraordinary effect. Much has been ſaid and much been done by critics of the firſt eminence in order to illuſtrate thoſe points, but I am of opinion that it will ever remain in ſome

ſome degree a myſtery, why one writer pleaſes above another, and conſequently why Shakeſpeare pleaſes above all others. I believe it requires a much more intimate acquaintance with the human mind than the acuteſt philoſopher can boaſt, to be able to trace the origin and progreſs of all thoſe aſſociations which contribute to the formation of pleaſurable ideas. We know, indeed, from experience, that the obſervation of certain long eſtabliſhed rules of compoſition pleaſes in a certain degree; and we can account tolerably, upon philoſophical principles, for the pleaſure we derive from thoſe ſources: but unfortunately for the lovers of ſyſtem, Shakeſpeare has dared to pleaſe in contradiction to rules, and that in a much higher degree than the moſt admired writers who have adhered to them. For I think it will be acknowledged, that even the Œdipus and Iphigenia of Sophocles and Euripides are inferior to Lear and Othello, in regard to the general effect of the compoſition; and to put the Cid and Athalie, thoſe *chef d'œuvres* of the French theatre, in competition with Shakeſpeare, is, as it were, to bring Paris into the liſts to encounter Ajax or Achilles. Without pretending to enter very deeply into the ſubject, I ſhall offer a few remarks, ſuch as occur to me, on the cauſes of this evident and prodigious ſuperiority; or, in other words, I propoſe to point out ſome of thoſe characteriſtic beauties which predominate in the works of Shakeſpeare, and which appear to me to conſtitute their principal excellence: and

perhaps the moſt ſtriking feature appertaining to them is this, "that they ſtrongly arreſt the attention."—Our curioſity is powerfully excited at the commencement of each piece, and it is never ſuffered to ſubſide till the concluſion of it: this is the moſt infallible teſt and proof of genius. Many of our modern tragedies, it muſt be acknowledged, are regular and faultleſs performances; ſome of them are not only free from material defects, but poſſeſs a conſiderable ſhare of real excellence; for inſtance, Cato, Irene, and Phædra and Hyppolitus. The diction of theſe plays is lofty and poetical, without being inflated; the ſentiments juſt and noble, the plots regularly conducted, the characters ſkilfully diverſified, and the unities ſtrictly preſerved. What can be wanting then to the perfection of tragedy? I know not; but this I know, that theſe tragedies, and ſuch as theſe, I read without emotion or ſympathy, with a certain ſenſation of pleaſure indeed, but ſo weak as ſcarcely to induce me to take up the performance a ſecond time, except it may be for the purpoſe of committing a few ſplendid paſſages to memory. They are defective in that firſt and greateſt power of compoſition, the power of ſeizing, faſcinating, and enchaining the attention: in a word, they are defective in *genius*, a term equally impoſſible to miſtake or to define. On the contrary, I am ſtill unable to read Lear, Macbeth, or Othello, often as I have peruſed them, without the ſtrongeſt emotions; not of admiration, for I have not leiſure

to

to admire till I have laid down the book—but of pity, terror, indignation, ſolicitude, and ſorrow; but is there not a ſufficient quantum of diſtreſs and misfortune to produce theſe effects in our modern dramas? Diſtreſſes and misfortunes there are in abundance, certainly; but ſo perverſe is my diſpoſition, that where the poet is moſt inclined to be ſerious, I am often moſt diſpoſed to be merry. I am as void of compaſſion as Launce's dog Crab. "I think," ſays he, "Crab, my dog, be the ſoureſt-natured dog that lives; my mother weeping, my father wailing, my ſiſter crying, our maid howling, our cat wringing her hands, and all our houſe in great perplexity, yet did not this cruel-hearted cur ſhed one tear." But not to dwell any longer on this obſcure and general cauſe of the ſuperiority of Shakeſpeare above all other dramatic writers, I believe it will be univerſally allowed, that his ſkill in diſcriminating, and his attention to the preſervation, of his characters, conſtitute a diſtinguiſhed branch of his ſuperior excellence. It is true, that in many other productions of the drama we meet with characters natural and conſiſtent, conceived with judgment, and ſuſtained with propriety: but the characters of Shakeſpeare are drawn with ſuch ſurpriſing force, as well as propriety and truth, that we can ſcarcely forbear to conſider them as originals actually in exiſtence. Many ſcenes are penned with ſuch an air of animation, of nature, and reality, that one is almoſt tempted to ſuppoſe that the poet had, like Bayes, overheard the dialogue

which he gives us as his own invention. Such is the ſcene in which Hamlet is firſt informed of the appearance of his father's ghoſt; ſuch the garden ſcene in Romeo and Juliet; and ſuch the ſcene in which Iago firſt awakens the jealouſy of Othello; and ſuch an hundred others. The characters of Shakeſpeare, alſo, are not only drawn with force and correctneſs, but many of them are of a very uncommon and original caſt.—Such as Falſtaff, Polonius, Jaques, Menenius, &c. Characters like theſe require the utmoſt care and delicacy in the execution, and afford the higheſt degree of entertainment when touched by the hand of a maſter: they are not ſo much cloſe and exact copies of nature, as bold imitations; they are not, perhaps, ſuch characters as do exiſt, but, when once invented, ſuch as might eaſily be ſuppoſed to exiſt. We perceive that they are ſo conſtructed as to diſplay the moſt perfect knowledge of the human mind; that the component parts of theſe characters are ſtrictly conſonant to thoſe ideas of truth and nature which we find in our own breaſts; but the combination is wholly new. Who will venture to aſſert, that the character of Falſtaff is unnatural; but, if we look into real life, where ſhall a Falſtaff be found? it was to be found in the inexhauſtible imagination of Shakeſpeare only:—though, ſo exquiſite is the workmanſhip of this "journeyman of nature," that it would ſcarcely ſeem hyperbolical and extravagant to ſay, with the poet,

"Nature herſelf, amaz'd, may doubting ſtand,
"Which is her own, and which the painter's hand."

It

It is further obſervable, that in characters of the ſame claſs, we find the niceſt and moſt curious ſhades of diſcrimination.——The heroines of Corneille are all of a family; but if we ſurvey with attention the characters of Deſdemona, of Imogen, of Ophelia, of Juliet, &c. all innocent and amiable, we perceive that each has her peculiar traits, which diſtinguiſh her from the reſt:——Juliet has not the artleſsneſs and ſimplicity of Deſdemona; Imogen has not the courage and reſolution of Juliet; Ophelia has not the tender and delicate affection of Imogen; nor Deſdemona the filial piety of Ophelia. Another remarkable circumſtance relating to this aſtoniſhing preſervation of character is, that he is always careful to imitate, and not merely to deſcribe, the feelings and paſſions of the different perſonages of the drama: the diſtinction between imitation and deſcription has been well illuſtrated by Lord Kaims; and it is certain, that nothing leſs than a genuine expreſſion of paſſion can awaken the attention or ſympathy of the ſpectator. Shakeſpeare deals very little in looſe and unmeaning declamation: in trying and critical ſituations, we have uſually the language of nature burſting from the heart; or if he fails, it is not by falling into the undramatical and unintereſting language of deſcription, but into ſentiments too much laboured, harſh or unſeaſonable metaphors, or quaint and farfetched conceits. Othello, when perfectly convinced of the falſehood of Deſdemona and the

treachery of Caſſio, thus exclaims, in the moſt perfect imitation of paſſion that can be conceived:

Oth. Oh! that the ſlave had forty thouſand lives;
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge!
Now do I ſee 'tis true.——Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven:
'Tis gone.——
Ariſe, black Vengeance, from thy hollow cell!
Yield up, O Love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous Hate! ſwell, boſom, with thy fraught,
For 'tis of aſpicks tongues!

Iago. Yet be content.

Oth. Oh! blood, blood, blood.

Iago. Patience, I ſay; your mind, perhaps, may change.

But here the language of imitation changes to that of deſcription:

Oth. Never, Iago: Like to the Pontick ſea,
Whoſe icy current and compulſive courſe
Ne'er feels retiring ebb, but keeps due on
To the Propontick, and the Helleſpont;
Even ſo my bloody thoughts, with violent pace,
Shall ne'er look back, ne'er ebb to humble love,
Till that a capable and wide revenge
Swallow them up.

Beautiful as this compariſon is, we feel the impropriety of it in the ſituation and circumſtances of the ſpeaker: this is a remarkable deviation from Shakeſpeare's uſual mode of writing; but if we look into modern plays, and into the works of the French dramatiſts, we ſhall find imitation of paſſion ſcarcely attempted, and deſcription every where prevalent.

The next remarkable characteriſtic of this great poet which offers itſelf to notice is, the beauty and

and energy of his diction. It is now two hundred years ſince he commenced writer, and in this time his language has acquired a certain obſolete caſt, an air of antiquity, which it muſt be owned is of no advantage to his comedies, for the ſtyle of comedy ſhould be always eaſy and familiar; but which gives to his tragic compoſitions an inexpreſſible grace and dignity. This is a ſpecies of excellence which modern writers cannot even attempt, without falling into a ſort of literary mimicry which is productive of a very ludicrous effect, as the tragedies of Cumberland fully evince. The beautiful concluding lines of Dryden's epiſtle to Kneller, are as applicable to the art of poetry as to that of painting; and it might have been as truly predicted of the works of a Shakeſpeare, as of thoſe of a Raffaelle.

> More cannot be by mortal art expreſt,
> But venerable age ſhall add the reſt.
> For Time ſhall with his ready pencil ſtand,
> Retouch your figures with his rip'ning hand;
> Mellow your colours, and imbrown the teint;
> Add every grace, which Time alone can grant;
> To future ages ſhall your fame convey,
> And give more beauties than he takes away.

It cannot however be doubted, but that the ſtyle and diction of Shakeſpeare muſt have originally poſſeſſed merit of the higheſt kind; the moſt forcible as well as the moſt beautiful combination of words which the Engliſh language affords, are to be found in his works. Where, in the whole range of

modern poetry, do we meet with ſuch powers of expreſſion as the following paſſages exhibit, which on the caſual opening of a volume almoſt immediately preſent themſelves.

All thoſe which were his fellows but of late,
Some better than his value, on the moment
Follow his ſtrides; his lobbies fill with tendance,
Rain ſacrificial whiſperings in his ear.

———Who dares, who dares,
In purity of manhood ſtand upright,
And ſay, This man's a flatterer? If one be,
So are they all; for every grize of fortune
Is ſmooth'd by that below: the learned pate
Ducks to the golden fool: all is oblique;—

——Here's gold; go on;——
Be as a planetary plague, when Jove
Will o'er ſome high-vic'd city hang his poiſon
In the ſick air.

———What! think'ſt thou
That the bleak air, thy boiſt'rous chamberlain,
Will put thy ſhirt on warm? Will theſe moſs'd trees,
That have out-liv'd the eagle, page thy heels;
And ſkip when thou point'ſt out? Will the cold brook,
Candy'd with ice, caudle thy morning taſte,
To cure thy o'er-night's ſurfeit? Call the creatures,
Whoſe naked natures live in all the ſpite
Of wreakful heaven; whoſe bare unhouſed trunks,
To the conflicting elements expos'd,
Anſwer meer nature—bid them flatter thee;
Oh, thou ſhalt find———

——Oh! dear divorce *(looking on the gold.)*
'Twixt natural ſon and ſire! thou bright defiler
Of Hymen's pureſt bed! thou valiant Mars!

Thou

Thou ever young, freſh, lov'd, and delicate wooer,
Whoſe bluſh doth thaw the conſecrated ſnow
That lies on Dian's lap! thou viſible god,
That ſolder'ſt cloſe impoſſibilities,
And mak'ſt them kiſs; that ſpeak'ſt with every tongue,
To every purpoſe! oh thou touch of hearts,
Think, thy ſlave man rebels; and by thy virtue
Set them into confounding odds, that beaſts
May have the world in empire!—&c. &c.

Timon of Athens.

I cannot diſmiſs theſe remarks reſpecting the beauty of his ſtyle, without noticing the aſtoniſhing variety and richneſs of his imagery. He is the moſt figurative writer, Oſſian perhaps excepted, in our language; yet his ſimilies and metaphors are choſen with ſuch exquiſite propriety, and ſo happily adapted to the diſpoſition, ſituation, and circumſtances, of the different ſpeakers, that his ſtyle very rarely appears ſtiff, or laboured, or affected; and if he is ever juſtly chargeable with thoſe faults, they much oftener ariſe from violent ellipſes and inverſions of language, from licentious modes of expreſſion, and words uſed in anomalous ſenſes, than from the improper or injudicious uſe of metaphorical ornament. I do not mean however to aſſert, that throughout the entire extent of his voluminous productions, are not to be found a very conſiderable number of indefenſible images, and even of ridiculous conceits; but I affirm, that they bear a very ſmall proportion to thoſe paſſages in which the happieſt uſe is made of this liberty; and "*the* "*poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,*" ſeems to glance

glance from heaven to earth in ſearch of objects, from whence to borrow apt and ſuitable alluſions to grace and dignify his page. His images are indeed taken from a moſt comprehenſive ſurvey of the works of nature and of art, and the knowledge he diſplays is ſo various and extenſive, that it cannot but raiſe aſtoniſhment, how in the courſe of a life, the early part of which appears to have been waſted in idleneſs and diſſipation, and the reſt devoted to the duties of his profeſſion as an actor, manager, and author, he could find opportunities to amaſs ſuch inexhauſtible ſtores of mental treaſure. The firſt act of Hamlet alone will furniſh a ſufficient number of examples, to ſhow the exquiſite judgment and taſte which Shakeſpeare exhibits in the choice and application of his metaphors.

——Look, the morn, in ruſſet mantle clad,
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eaſtward hill.

Laer. For Hamlet, and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a faſhion, and a toy in blood;
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent; tho' ſweet, not laſting.
The chaſteſt maid is prodigal enough,
If ſhe unmaſk her beauty to the moon:
Virtue itſelf ſcapes not calumnious ſtrokes:
The canker galls the infants of the ſpring,
Too oft before their bloſſoms are diſclos'd,
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blaſtments are moſt imminent.

Oph. I ſhall th' effects of this good leſſon keep,
As watchmen to my heart: but, good my brother,
Do not, as ſome ungracious paſtors do,

Shew

Shew me the ſteep and thorny way to heaven;
Whilſt, like a puft and careleſs libertine,
Himſelf the primroſe path of dalliance treads
And recks not his own read.

——My fate cries out,
And makes each petty artery in this body
As hardy as the Nemean lion's nerve.

——I find thee apt;
And duller ſhould'ſt thou be than the fat weed
That roots itſelf at eaſe on Lethe's wharf,
Would'ſt thou not ſtir in this.—&c. &c.

The laſt particular which I ſhall inſiſt upon, as one of the principal characteriſtics of this great poet, is the unrivalled ſkill or rather felicity of his verſification; for, though nothing can appear leſs the effect of care and ſtudy, never did any author ſo happily expreſs, and in ſuch a variety of inſtances, that curious correſpondence between ſenſe and ſound in which its grand excellence conſiſts; his cadences are ſometimes ſo melodious and grateful to the ear, that they may be compared to the ſoft and mellifluous breathings of a flute; and at other times ſo full and powerful, as to reſemble the animating ſounds of the trumpet: every paſſion and affection of the mind aſſumes that preciſe tone which is peculiarly ſuitable to it; and the accents of grief, rage, love, pity, indignation, and deſpair, are ſcarcely to be diſtinguiſhed with leſs eaſe and certainty by the various flow of the numbers, than the preciſe ſenſe of the paſſages from the words. If this has the air of hyperbole and extravagance, I can only ſay, that though the admirers of this poet

poet have perhaps been too forward to defend or extenuate his faults: in ſpeaking of his characteriſtic excellencies and beauties, I really think it is almoſt impoſſible to be guilty of exceſs in our applauſe: there appears even ſomething almoſt ſupernatural in the genius of this man; ſomething to which the reſt of mankind bear neither relation nor reſemblance. But it may be proper to ſubjoin a few ſpecimens of the curious felicity in his verſification, which I have been remarking upon, and which may ſerve at once as illuſtrations and proofs of what I have advanced. How ſlow and mournful the movement of the following lines!

Conſt. What doſt thou mean by ſhaking of thy head?
Why doſt thou look ſo ſadly on my ſon?
What means that hand upon that breaſt of thine?
Why holds thine eye that lamentable rheum?
Be theſe ſad ſighs confirmers of thy words? &c.
King John.

How ſtriking the tranſition to the language of fury and revenge!

Arm, arm, ye heavens! againſt theſe perjur'd kings!
————Hear me, oh, hear me!
Oh, that my tongue were in the thunder's mouth!
Then with my paſſion would I ſhake the world, &c.
Ibid.

One would imagine Shakeſpeare was deſcribing, in theſe charming lines, the very effect which they are made to produce.

That ſtrain again; it had a dying fall:
Oh, it came o'er my ear like the ſweet ſouth,
That

That breathes upon a bank of violets,
Stealing, and giving odour. . . . *Twelfth Night.*

But in what bold and ſounding language are the grand and magnificent ideas expreſſed, which are conveyed in the following lines:

Ye elves of hills, &c.——by whoſe aid
(Weak maſters though ye be) I have bedimm'd
The noon-tide ſun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green ſea and the azur'd vault
Set roaring war: to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's ſtout oak
With his own bolt: the ſtrong bas'd promontory
Have I made ſhake; and by the ſpurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar. *The Tempeſt.*

It ſeems to me ſcarcely poſſible to pronounce the following line and a half in a tone of voice much above a whiſper:

Pray you, tread ſoftly, that the blind mole may not
Hear a foot fall. *Ibid.*

How gay and pleaſing the turn of the verſe when Romeo's dreams "preſage ſome joyful news at hand:"

My boſom's lord ſits lightly on his throne;
And, all this day, an unaccuſtomed ſpirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts.

How ſoft and tender the accents of love in this and a thouſand other paſſages:

——Oh hear me breath my love
Before this ancient Sir, who, it ſhould ſeem,
Hath ſometime lov'd. I take thy hand, this hand
As ſoft as dove's down, and as white as it,

Or

Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd ſnow,
That's bolted by the northern blaſt thrice o'er.
Winters Tale.

But enough of quotations. I might go on to enlarge on the admirable ſentiments, and maxims of morality, with which his works abound: it has been truly obſerved, that a perfect ſyſtem of ethics might be extracted from them. I might expatiate on the ſkill with which he conducts and combines the different branches of his fable. I might extol the variety and brilliancy of his wit; and, perhaps with ſtill greater juſtice, the depth and ſolidity of his judgment, diſplaying itſelf in the moſt profound and ſagacious reflections, the moſt accurate and demonſtrative reaſonings. But I wave inſiſting upon theſe topics, becauſe it ſeems to me, that in theſe reſpects, other writers have advanced, if not to an equality, at leaſt much nearer to an equality than they have been able to attain in the points already mentioned, in the firſt and greateſt characteriſtic of genius, the power of moving the paſſions and enchaining the attention; in the faculty of inventing and pourtraying characters, that fundamental excellence of the drama; in the beauty and energy of ſtyle, and diction, and imagery, and in the power of numbers, and felicity and facility of verſification.

I am not inſenſible to the merit of the French writers. In every walk of literature, and particularly in the dramatic, they have, by their ingenious productions, done the higheſt honour to themſelves and to their country. I acknowledge, that had we

we not a Shakeſpeare to boaſt, none of our tragic pieces, unleſs an exception be made in favour of Venice Preſerv'd and the Orphan, could juſtly be put in competition with Cinna, Polyeucte, Athalie, Iphigene, and many other pieces of Corneille and Racine, which might be enumerated; but in my opinion, Corneille and Racine themſelves ſtand at a much greater diſtance from Shakeſpeare, than Rowe, or Otway, or Fletcher, from them. For one Shakeſpeare, I believe, Nature forms many Corneilles; and I ſhould as ſoon expect to ſee another Newton in philoſophy, as another Shakeſpeare in dramatic poetry.

Voltaire pretends, indeed, that Lopez de Vega was 200 years ago, in Spain, exactly what Shakeſpeare was in England. As I have never had an opportunity of peruſing any of the performances of that voluminous author, I cannot take upon me to controvert the aſſertion; but, as Voltaire's *ipſe dixit* does not amount to demonſtration, I ſhall beg leave to ſuſpend my belief of it, till good ſenſe and good taſte become as prevalent in Spain as they now are in England; and when that period arrives, if Lopez de Vega continues as much the object of admiration as at preſent, the univerſal opinion of ſo learned and enlightened a nation will undoubtedly form the ſtrongeſt preſumption, that his genius was of the higheſt claſs, and that his name and works are deſtined to immortality. This preſumption now exiſts in favour of Shakeſpeare. I conſider him as only entering his career of fame

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and glory; and, to adopt the words of an animated writer, "When the very name of Voltaire, and even the memory of the language in which he has written, ſhall be no more, the Apalachian mountains, the banks of the Ohio, and the plains of Sciota, ſhall refound with the accents of this barbarian."

Ben Jonſon has been accuſed of giving a ſcanty and reluctant tribute of applauſe to his great rival; but there is in his eulogium one line, one prophetic line, which ſhows that he perfectly underſtood, and freely acknowledged, his tranſcendent merit:

"He was not for an age, but for all time."

And without queſtion he is entitled to a place in the higheſt rank of that illuſtrious band—

"Whoſe honours with encreaſing ages grow,
As ſtreams roll down enlarging as they flow;
Nations unborn his mighty name ſhall ſound,
And worlds applaud that muſt not yet be found.

ESSAY III.

On the Reign and Character of QUEEN ELIZABETH.

IT has lately been much the faſhion to ſpeak in very diſparaging terms of the perſon and government of Queen Elizabeth.—This celebrated princeſs, during a reign of almoſt half a century, and for a period of a century and half ſucceeding her death, was the object of univerſal reverence and admiration; and to this very day her name, to the bulk of the people, carries a kind of magic in the ſound; they conſider her reign as a kind of golden age, as the halcyon days of perpetual proſperity and felicity; but ſeveral perſons, eminent for the profundity of their hiſtorical reſearches, have diſcovered, to the great amazement of thoſe who owe their knowledge to common report and information, that the diſpoſition of that princeſs was arbitrary and imperious, that the maxims of her government were odious and tyrannical, that her authority was deſpotic, and that the political conſtitution of this country in her days bore a remarkable reſemblance to that of Turkey at preſent. This, and much more, has Mr. Hume in particular aſſerted, in a very high and peremptory tone; and, as a neceſſary conſequence of theſe

aſſertions, he has taken much pains to exculpate the two firſt princes of the houſe of Stuart, from the various accuſations that have been brought againſt them, of introducing arbitrary and unconſtitutional principles of government into their adminiſtration. According to the repreſentation of that eloquent hiſtorian, thoſe monarchs have been treated, both during their lives and ſince their deaths, with the higheſt ingratitude and injuſtice; and if this repreſentation is juſt, England muſt paſs for the moſt whimſical and capricious of all nations; for, without any reaſonable or aſſignable cauſe, Queen Elizabeth has ever been, and ſtill is, the object of the higheſt admiration and applauſe, whilſt the unfortunate James and Charles are regarded, the one with contempt, the other with deteſtation.—But this account cannot give entire ſatisfaction to thoſe who believe human nature to be conſtituted on certain fixed and immutable principles, and who are conſequently inclined to believe, that oppoſite effects cannot well proceed from ſimilar cauſes in ſimilar circumſtances.

Certainly Mr. Hume has no reaſon to expect that we ſhould entertain a very high idea of that philoſophy which cannot account for moral appearances upon moral principles, or which ſatisfies itſelf with a vague or general ſolution, without attempting to trace the connection between the ſuppoſed cauſes and their reſpective effects.—If any one ſhould aſk how is it poſſible to account for the ſudden diffuſion of chriſtianity in the world,

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what can be eaſier than to reply, that it can be accounted for only by the credulity of mankind. So if any inquiſitive perſon ſhould deſire to be informed of the cauſe of the oppoſite impreſſions, which ſeem indelibly fixed on the minds of the public, reſpecting the characters and conduct of theſe ſucceſſive Sovereigns, the anſwer is equally ready,—it is whim, caprice, and faſhion. As I have, from my earlieſt recollection, been accuſtomed to hold the name and memory of Elizabeth in the utmoſt eſteem and veneration, I cannot now adopt other ſentiments, without feeling a reluctance, which, that it may not appear altogether the effect of prejudice, I ſhall attempt in ſome degree to account for, and juſtify, by a general review of the leading features of her political character and adminiſtration, contraſted with thoſe of her ſucceſſors of the houſe of Stuart.

During the civil conteſts which ſo long prevailed between the rival houſes of York and Lancaſter, the regal authority, irregular as the exertions of it ſometimes appear, was ſubjected to a variety of important and ſalutary reſtraints. As the one or the other party prevailed, popular laws were enacted, in order to acquire and preſerve the good will of the nation, which the oppoſite faction, when in power, could not venture to repeal; and in the reign of Edward IV Lord Forteſcue was able to demonſtrate, in ſtriking colours, the ſuperiority of the Engliſh conſtitution and government, compared

with thoſe of the ſurrounding nations *; which indeed was ſufficiently manifeſt from the reign of our Engliſh Juſtinian, Edward I. In the ſhort period that Richard III. held the ſceptre, many excellent political regulations were made. And when the battle of Boſworth placed Henry VII. upon the throne, he endeavoured, at leaſt for ſome years, to recommend himſelf to the nation, who, were in general much attached to the houſe of York, by ſimilar means; though it muſt be confeſſed that, upon the whole, the authority of the monarch was during this reign conſiderably augmented, the diſcretionary juriſdiction of the Court of Star Chamber being much enlarged, and the power of the ariſtocracy in a great meaſure broken; and towards the latter end of the reign of his ſucceſſor, by a remarkable concurrence of cauſes, the royal prerogative had eſtabliſhed itſelf, to appearance, above all control; but in proportion as thoſe adventitious circumſtances

* "Non poteſt rex Angliæ ad libitum ſuum leges mutare regni ſui. Principatu namque nodum regali, ſed et politico ipſe ſuo populo dominatur. Si regali tantum præeſſet eis, leges regni ſui mutare ille poſſet; tallagia quoque et cætera onera eis imponere, ipſis inconſultis; quale dominium denotant leges civiles cum dicant, "Quod principi placuit legis habet vigorem." Sed longè aliter poteſt lex politicè imperans genti ſuæ, quia nec leges ipſe ſine ſubditorum aſſenſu mutare poterit, nec ſubjectum populum retinentem onerare impoſitionibus peregrinis: quare populus ejus liberè fruetur bonis ſuis: legibus quas cupit regulatus, nec per regem aut quemvis alium depilatur." FORTESCUE, DE LEG. ANG.

which

which had occaſioned this extraordinary exaltation diſappeared, new limits were ſet to the power of the crown; and during the minority of Edward VI. the conſtitution was, in a great meaſure, reſtored; and, notwithſtanding the violence of religious perſecution in the ſucceeding reign, the parliament gave ſignal proofs of its attention to the ſecurity and preſervation of the civil privileges of the nation; and Queen Elizabeth, at her acceſſion, found herſelf in poſſeſſion of a crown, inveſted indeed with ample and ſplendid, and in ſome meaſure indefinite, powers; but theſe powers were to be exerciſed over ſubjects poſſeſſing privileges of the moſt important nature: ſome of them of high antiquity, of the value of which they were perfectly ſenſible, and which nothing ſhort of the moſt outrageous violence could deprive them of. It may even be affirmed, that the condition of the lower claſſes of people was at that time, in many reſpects, preferable to what it now is.

In the middle of the ſixteenth century the feudal ſyſtem was expiring, villanage was virtually aboliſhed, and all orders of men enjoyed the protection and benefit of the ſame general ſyſtem of laws. In thoſe days juſtices of the peace were not, as at preſent, a ſort of cadies, the objects of dread and terror to the ſurrounding villages; nor were there game laws, or poor laws, or revenue laws at that time exiſting, to be made the inſtruments of tyranny, oppreſſion, or revenge. The liberty and property of the higher ranks were effectually ſecured by the equitable and ſimple maxims of the common law, aided by the eſta-

bliſhed forms of judicial proceedings, and by many wiſe and ſalutary ſtatutes; and though it was not at that period ſuppoſed poſſible to ſupport the authority of government, without exerciſing, upon certain occaſions, a degree of diſcretionary power, which in the preſent advanced ſtate of ſociety would juſtly excite the higheſt alarm; yet, as this interference, comparatively ſpeaking, did not often occur, and only in caſes which were ſuppoſed more immediately to affect the ſafety of government, it did not in fact give any great ſhock to the general ſyſtem of liberty; and the arbitrary acts of the council, or the Star Chamber, while a firm confidence in the wiſdom and juſtice of the government prevailed, did not more diſturb the public tranquillity, than the eccentric motions of comets interrupt the general order and harmony of the ſolar ſyſtem. The itinerant judges, and the courts in Weſtminſter Hall, were the uſual and regular channels through which juſtice and judgment were diſtributed to the whole kingdom; and every true and loyal ſubject, to uſe the words of the great dramatic bard, could "in her days eat in ſafety,"

"Under his own vine, what he planted, and ſing
"The merry ſongs of peace to all his neighbours."

This princeſs ſucceeded her ſiſter, the deteſtable Mary, at a very critical period. The nation was divided between two powerful and implacable religious factions, and moreover involved in a war with France, equally unpopular and unſucceſsful; her title was by many thought queſtionable. She was deſtitute of foreign alliances, and even of the ſupport

ſupport of any perſons eminently diſtinguiſhed for authority or influence at home. In this precarious ſituation, her great dependence was on the fidelity and affection of her people; theſe ſhe reſolved by every means in her power to cultivate; and her ſucceſs was equal to the higheſt expectations ſhe could form.—The Engliſh nation, with ~~laſhed forms of judicial proceedings, and by many~~ all that ardour and generoſity which conſtitute a diſtinguiſhed part of their character, repaid her attention and ſolicitude for their welfare, with an affection and gratitude which knew no bounds; and, in the warmth of mutual confidence, and mutual attachment, it was ſcarcely perceived that the extenſive and undefined powers of the crown were incompatible with the liberty of the ſubject, or that the neceſſary ſecurity of that liberty loudly called for a diminution or circumſcription of that prerogative which they ſaw exerciſed ſo much to the advantage of the public. As the limits of this eſſay do not allow me to enter into a chronological review of this remarkable reign, in order to preſerve ſome degree of method, I ſhall mention ſeveral particulars, in which the political character and conduct of Elizabeth differ very eſſentially from thoſe of her immediate ſucceſſors.

And, 1ſt, Nothing can be more evident, throughout the whole courſe of her reign, than her conſtant and anxious ſolicitude that all her political tranſactions ſhould have the ſtamp and ſanction of national approbation. Her great popularity is ſometimes repreſented as the

effect of artifice. She was poſſeſſed, it is ſaid, of the arts of inſinuation: ſhe knew how to cajole, how to coax, and to flatter; but can any one believe that, in the courſe of more than forty years, theſe arts ſhould not have been detected? It is ſurely paying an ill compliment to the ſagacity of the nation to ſuppoſe the contrary; but if at that time a full perſuaſion of her ſincerity prevailed, it is certainly harſh and unjuſtifiable to ſtigmatize her laudable endeavours to pleaſe with the appellations of deceit and ſimulation. Not that a degree of art may not, upon ſome occaſions, have been uſed with ſucceſs; but if ſhe had not been really deſirous and anxious that all her determinations in matters of public import ſhould be approved by her people, and if ſhe had not in a great meaſure regulated her political conduct by the views and ſentiments of the nation at large, it is impoſſible that all her arts could have availed to produce a general or permanant ſatisfaction. With what addreſs and caution did ſhe conduct the great buſineſs of reſtoring the proteſtant religion! What nice attention to the national honour appeared in ſettling the terms of the treaty with France! for though ſhe well knew that Calais was irretrievably loſt, and probably did not even wiſh for the reſtitution of it, as it was a favourite object with the nation, ſhe would not, by an abſolute ceſſion, give too great a ſhock to their hopes and their prejudices. When preſſed to marriage by the parliament, in what ſoft and gracious terms did ſhe couch her refuſal! "She was already wedded:—England was her huſband,

band, and all Engliſhmen her children." The part ſhe took in the affairs of Scotland was perfectly agreeable to the ſentiments of the nation, and, I think, to every principle of ſound policy. Notwithſtanding that her jealouſy was unavoidably awakened by the exorbitant claims ſo openly advanced by the Queen of Scots, and by her obſtinate refuſal to ratify the treaty of Edinburgh, ſhe yet ſhewed her diſpoſition to maintain an amicable correſpondence with that princeſs after her arrival in Scotland; and her ſucceeding misfortunes were owing, not to the intrigues of Elizabeth, but to her own unexampled indiſcretions—I ſhould rather ſay, her own atrocious criminalities; and her long impriſonment, trial, and execution, were juſtified by the ſtrongeſt reaſons of ſtate neceſſity, and by the urgent and unanimous wiſhes and applications of the whole Engliſh nation. The aſſiſtance ſhe gave to the United Provinces againſt Spain, and to Henry the Fourth of France, during the continuance of the league, perfectly coincided with the views and inclinations of her own ſubjects, and was productive of the moſt important and beneficial effects. The war with Spain, which was the neceſſary conſequence of theſe meaſures, was as popular as it was glorious; and though in one important point ſhe declined gratifying the wiſhes of the kingdom, by delaying to ſettle the ſucceſſion to the crown—and there were indeed political as well as perſonal reaſons of great weight, why a ſucceſſor ſhould not be appointed; yet ſhe made it ſufficiently evident, that her views and intentions

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in that grand point entirely coincided with thoſe of the beſt and wiſeſt men in the nation, who all turned their eyes to the King of Scotland, as the man deſtined by Providence to unite in bands of eternal amity and concord two nations, which had for ſo many ages ſubſiſted in a ſtate of mutual diſtruſt and enmity. But if we paſs on to the reign of this monarch and his ſon, the unfortunate Charles, what a contraſt! In what ſingle inſtance do we find the intereſts of the people conſulted, or their wiſhes gratified? In the countenance and encouragement given by the court to the catholic religion, at a time when the principles and practices of the puritans became every day more prevalent? In ſacrificing the gallant Raleigh, to appeaſe the reſentment of Spain? In the deſertion of his own children, the King and Queen of Bohemia, under their accumulated diſtreſſes? In his tame acquieſcence in the horrid affair of Amboyna? or in the mean and ſervile court he paid to the Houſe of Auſtria, in his attempts to procure the reſtoration of the palatinate, and to accompliſh that great object of his ambition, the marriage of his ſon with the Infanta? Did his ſon and ſucceſſor Charles diſcover any greater condeſcenſion for the opinions or prejudices of his ſubjects in eſpouſing a catholic princeſs, and granting, in conſequence of this alliance, additional privileges and immunities to the profeſſors of that religion? In involving the nation in two dangerous wars, to gratify the prepoſterous vanity and reſentment of a worthleſs favourite? By levying taxes in a time of

of profound peace, by virtue of the regal authority? By a profeſſed intention of governing without parliaments, by violent attempts to ſuppreſs puritaniſm in England; and by ſtill more violent attempts to introduce the moſt odious innovations of a religious nature in Scotland? But I ſhall enlarge no further on this point: it is too plain to be denied, that the public meaſures of Elizabeth were in general agreeable to the ſenſe of the nation, and that ſhe wiſhed and endeavoured they ſhould be ſo; and it is as plain, that in the ſucceeding reigns public opinion was wholly diſregarded, and that almoſt all the meaſures of government were the reſult of pride, obſtinacy, and folly.

But, 2dly, The contraſt between that great princeſs and her ſucceſſors appears equally ſtriking, if we conſider their reſpective characters in what may be termed a legal point of view, or as ſovereigns poſſeſſed of a limited authority. Though it muſt be confeſſed that the deportment of Queen Elizabeth, notwithſtanding her general affability, was, upon ſome occaſions, ſufficiently imperious; it does not appear that ſhe ever had an idea of advancing ſuch exorbitant principles and pretenſions as James the Firſt perpetually inſiſted upon, in his reaſonings and ſpeculations upon government; and which Charles, fatally for himſelf, attempted to reduce to practice. Mr. Hume aſſerts, that the only buſineſs of parliament in this reign was to grant ſubſidies: "They pretended indeed," ſays he, "to the right of enacting laws." Pretended! and did they not exerciſe this right?

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If Mr. Hume had taken the trouble to conſult the Statute Book, he would have known that very many important and ſalutary laws were enacted in this reign. The parliament did not, indeed, aſſume a power of controlling the crown in *matters of ſtate*, as they were called, or, in other words, of directing her tranſactions with foreign powers; and the Queen's conduct in this reſpect gave ſuch entire ſatisfaction to the public, that they were under little or no temptation to interfere; but they uſually confined themſelves to the leſs ſplendid, but more uſeful, employment of ſuperintending the domeſtic concerns of the nation; and it is obſervable, that, to this day, parliament poſſeſſes no authority, properly ſpeaking, reſpecting foreign affairs; though the extenſive powers veſted in that body, and the utter inability of the crown to ſupport itſelf without aſſiſtance, give it the higheſt degree of influence, whenever it judges interference neceſſary. Mr. Hume pleaſes to aſſert, that England had leſs reaſon to boaſt of her liberties in the reign of Elizabeth, than the generality of foreign nations at preſent: but let us ſuppoſe for a moment, that the authority of the general aſſembly of eſtates in France were reſtored; that all traces of vaſſalage were aboliſhed; that trials by jury were introduced; that in the regular courts of judicature nothing were regarded as law, but what had been expreſsly aſſented to, and enacted by the repreſentatives of the people; and, that individuals of every rank in public ſtations were diveſted of all diſcretionary powers, and obliged to conform

conform their conduct to the ſtandard of the laws; that the formidable ſtanding army of that kingdom were annihilated, and taxes levied only by the authority of the eſtates of the realm. Would any man in his ſenſes take upon him to ſay—notwithſtanding that the authority which remained to the crown might be in a great degree indefinite; notwithſtanding the exiſtence of irregular courts, which might be empowered to take cognizance of extraordinary caſes; notwithſtanding that the ſovereign might, ſometimes, uſe very lofty and imperious language to the legiſlative body, and even dare occaſionally to violate what, by the enlightened jealouſy of our times, would be ſtyled their moſt eſſential rights and privileges: Would any man, I aſk, venture to affirm, that liberty had not made very great advances in that kingdom? Could it be denied, that in fact they were in poſſeſſion of a free conſtitution?—that, if they were ſenſible of the ineſtimable advantages they enjoyed, a regular ſyſtem of liberty might eaſily be eſtabliſhed on ſuch a baſis? If, indeed, the government of a country, in ſuch circumſtances, was conducted with addreſs and ability; if the public intereſts were upon the whole underſtood and purſued; if the extraordinary and irregular exertions of prerogative were ſuch as the neceſſity of the ſtate ſeemed to juſtify; if a due regard was paid to public opinion, and a juſt reverence maintained for the authority of the laws, in the common and ordinary courſe of proceedings; the general ſatiſfaction

faction and popularity attending ſuch a government, muſt naturally preclude any vigorous attempts to improve the conſtitution, or eſtabliſh the principles of liberty, on a more ſecure or extenſive foundation. Theſe ſpeculative ideas nearly correſpond, I think, with the real ſtate of things in the times of Elizabeth; but if the ſceptre ſhould, in ſimilar circumſtances, devolve to weak or obſtinate princes, who held public opinion in contempt, who purſued meaſures incompatible with the public intereſts, who had the imprudence, upon every occaſion, to advance ſpeculative principles utterly ſubverſive of every degree of civil or political freedom; who inſiſted, that the privileges of the ſubjects were derived merely from the grace and favour of their ſovereign, and the power of the prince from God alone; and eſpecially if theſe ſlaviſh principles were reduced to practice; if they were converted into fundamental maxims of government; if there were evident marks of a regular and concerted plan for the extinction of popular privileges, and for reducing the nation to the moſt abject ſtate of ſubmiſſion to the will of the monarch; if no other reaſon than "ſuch "is our pleaſure," was aſſigned for the moſt irregular and violent exertions of power; a nation muſt be deſtitute of every ſpark of public virtue, and public ſpirit, and even deaf to the dictates of common ſenſe, who did not, in conſequence of ſuch alarming inroads upon the conſtitution, take occaſion to ſcrutinize with more accuracy into the nature

nature and foundation of human authority; who did not make uſe of the advantages they poſſeſſed, to circumſcribe within narrower limits, and to aſcertain by more exact boundaries, thoſe powers, and that prerogative, which had excited ſuch juſt and general apprehenſions.——This repreſentation I take to be perfectly applicable to the ſtate of affairs in the reigns of James and Charles.

Mr. Hume expreſſes his ſurpriſe, that ſo different a fate ſhould attend the memories of Henry VIII. and Charles I.; but I confeſs I ſee nothing very extraordinary or ſingular in the caſe. Henry VIII. was undoubtedly a tyrant, but he was at the ſame time poſſeſſed of qualities which will always command a certain degree of reſpect; and it muſt be conſidered, that though a variety of cauſes then concurred to diſturb the balance of the conſtitution, and to throw a prodigious weight of power into the ſcale of the crown, yet the parliament was uſually made, even in that reign, the inſtrument of regal tyranny; by which means he not only gave dignity and efficacy to his meaſures, but eſcaped a great ſhare of the popular odium which would otherwiſe have attended him. Let it be conſidered too, that Henry never went the lengths in the delicate and dangerous buſineſs of taxation which Charles ventured to do; not to mention that, in the long period of a century, very eſſential alterations in a political ſyſtem may reaſonably be ſuppoſed to take place; and it is as prepoſterous to attempt to juſtify or palliate the arbitrary conduct

conduct of Charles I. by appealing to precedents drawn from the reign of Henry VIII. as it would be to vindicate any illegal or unconſtitutional practice of the preſent reign, by an appeal to the direful precedents of the latter days of Charles the Second.—In the beginning of the ſeventeenth century, the maxims of the reign of Henry VIII. were become obſolete. Men were accuſtomed to another mode of government; their minds were occupied by the recollection of the glorious and proſperous times of Elizabeth, when uninterrupted affection and harmony ſubſiſted between the ſovereign and the people; and if the prerogative was exerted occaſionally in an irregular and arbitrary manner, thoſe very exertions were ſeen, or were thought at leaſt, to be neceſſary, and no apprehenſions were entertained that they were the reſult of a fixed and preconcerted plan to enſlave the nation. Charles I. was a tyrant as well as Henry VIII. but he attempted the part at a period far more unfavourable to the ſucceſs of his deſigns. Mr. Hume pretends, that the circumſtances in which he was placed were in the higheſt degree critical; and plauſibly apologizes for him, by ſaying, that his capacity was not equal to ſituations of ſuch extreme delicacy: but I cannot conceive that his ſituation at the commencement of his reign was to be compared in point of difficulty with that of Elizabeth. In the progreſs of it, indeed, it muſt be confeſſed, that he frequently involved himſelf by his own imprudence, or rather infatuation,

infatuation, in circumſtances of ſuch extreme difficulty, that had he even poſſeſſed the capacity of Elizabeth, he could not have extricated himſelf with honour. But I cannot perceive that it required more than a common ſhare of common ſenſe to ſee, that the temper of the times would not bear even thoſe ſtretches of prerogative, which were thought neceſſary, or excuſable at leaſt, in the days of Elizabeth; much leſs any wanton or novel exertions of power; and leaſt of all would it bear an open and almoſt avowed deſign to reduce the nation to a ſtate of ſuch abject and unreſerved ſubmiſſion, that, if it had ſucceeded, Mr. Hume might indeed have had reaſon ſufficient for his aſſertion, reſpecting the reſemblance of the Engliſh government to that of Turkey.

It is impoſſible, in an hiſtorical ſketch of this kind, to deſcend to particulars, elſe it would be eaſy to illuſtrate theſe general obſervations, by a variety of inſtances. I cannot, however, forbear to mention a few plain facts, which may be confidently oppoſed to the ſpecious colourings and declamation of that celebrated writer. It is not uncommon even for perſons of candour and underſtanding, not very deeply verſed in Engliſh hiſtory, when they read ſuch authors as Mr. Hume, haſtily to conclude, that the fame and reputation of Queen Elizabeth are built on a falſe and viſionary baſis. They ſee with amazement, that, in numerous inſtances, ſhe is juſtly chargeable with what would now be ſtyled groſs and palpable

violations of the moſt ſacred principles of the conſtitution. They forget that the queſtion is not whether ſhe acted agreeably to thoſe enlarged ideas of political liberty which now prevail; but whether ſhe regulated her conduct by the temper and ſpirit of the times in which ſhe lived; and whether ſhe violated any of thoſe principles which were in that age held ſacred. On the other hand, it muſt, without doubt, ſurpriſe thoſe who conceive of Queen Elizabeth, as a princeſs poſſeſſed of deſpotic authority, which is the idea Mr. Hume labours to inculcate, to be made acquainted with many circumſtances of her conduct and management in the courſe of her reign.

In the very commencement of it, the odious and ſanguinary inſtruments of her ſiſter's cruelties eſcaped with impunity; becauſe they had acted under the ſanction of the law. So mild were the maxims of the government at this period, that the deteſtable and inhuman Bonner himſelf could venture to appear in public, and even at court, with perfect ſecurity. The Queen indeed, it is remarked, averted her eyes, no doubt with horror, from that man of blood; but no other mark of diſgrace or reſentment followed. Biſhop Burnet informs us, that Cecil and the other counſellors of Elizabeth were unanimouſly of opinion, that no ſteps ſhould be taken by the Queen's highneſs, to reſtore the Proteſtant religion, till a parliament could be ſummoned; and we accordingly find, that nothing of conſequence was done, in that important

portant buſineſs, without the ſanction of legiſlative authority. In the enſuing parliament, the affair of the ſucceſſion, which had been ſlightly touched on by the preceding one, was reſumed with great warmth, and the Queen was reduced to a very diſagreeable dilemma. The right of blood clearly reſted in the houſe of Stuart; but the will of Henry VIII. the validity of which, though founded on an act of parliament was however the ſubject of much diſpute, was expreſs in favour of the houſe of Suffolk. An authoritative and ultimate deciſion in favour of either muſt be attended with obvious inconveniences to the reigning ſovereign.

To prevent the Houſe from urging the matter any farther, ſhe was obliged contrary probably to her real intentions, as well as her former declarations, to give them ſome hopes, and intimations, that ſhe entertained views of entering into the marriage ſtate. With theſe hopes they appeared in a great degree ſatisfied; but time proving them to be fallacious, in a few years they renewed their application for a ſettlement of the crown, with greater vehemence than ever. The Queen on this occaſion, was ſo far provoked, as to prohibit the Houſe from proceeding any farther in this matter: however, as little regard was paid to her orders, however peremptory, ſhe thought proper, by another meſſage, graciouſly to revoke them, and to allow the Houſe liberty of debate. She again intimated her intentions of ſpeedy marriage; but, finding this artifice did not make much impreſſion,

ſhe plainly declared her apprehenſions, that the appointment of a ſucceſſor would be attended with great danger to her perſon; that ſhe knew, by her own experience during the reign of her ſiſter, how much court was uſually paid to the next heir, and what dangerous ſacrifices men were diſpoſed to make of their preſent duty to their future proſpects; and that ſhe was, therefore, determined to delay, till a more proper opportunity, the deciſion of this important queſtion.—The Houſe, finding the extreme reluctance of the Queen to comply with their wiſhes, thought proper to drop the proſecution of this ſubject for the preſent; and the Queen, on diſſolving the parliament, reiterated her proteſtations of regard for the welfare and ſafety of her ſubjects, and diſclaimed the moſt diſtant intention of encroaching on their rights and liberties; but, ſtill fearing that her conduct might leave injurious impreſſions, ſhe voluntarily remitted a conſiderable part of the ſubſidy voted by parliament; declaring, that, as ſhe had no immediate occaſion for the money, ſhe was as well ſatisfied it ſhould remain in her ſubjects pockets as in her own Exchequer.

In the year 1571 another parliament was ſummoned; and the principles of the Puritans having made great progreſs in the intervening years, attempts were made in the Houſe of Commons to procure ſome further reformation in religion; but the ſuperintendency of eccleſiaſtical affairs being

being veſted in the crown by the act of ſupremacy, the Queen took offence at theſe proceedings; and went ſo far as to reſtrain, by an order of council, a member named Strictland, who had the preſumption to move the obnoxious bill in queſtion, from giving his attendance in parliament. The Commons immediately took fire at this unuſual ſtretch of power; and it was boldly and unreſervedly declared, that the Members of that Houſe were amenable for their conduct, in that capacity, to no other juriſdiction; that, though the prerogative of the Crown ought not to be violated, yet was that prerogative limited by law; and that as the Sovereign could not make laws, ſo neither was he entitled to break them, of his own authority. The court party, by moving an adjournment, prevented the Houſe from paſſing any violent reſolutions upon this occaſion; and the next day the Queen had the good ſenſe and moderation to ſend her royal permiſſion to Strictland to attend his duty in parliament. Upon a queſtion reſpecting monopolies, the power of granting which at that time conſtituted a dangerous branch of the prerogative, Sir Humphrey Gilbert adviſed the Houſe to beware, leſt, if they meddled farther with theſe matters, the Queen might look to her own power; and, finding herſelf able to ſuppreſs their challenged liberty, and to exert an arbitrary authority, might imitate the example of Lewis XI. of France, who, he obſerved, had delivered that crown from wardſhip; a plain indication, ſurely, that a fundamental

difference at this time exiſted, and was perceived to exiſt, between the two monarchies of France and England.

In the year ſucceeding the defeat of the Armada, a parliament being held, ſome regulations were propoſed reſpecting the abuſes of purveyance, and certain alterations moved in the practice of the court of Exchequer; upon which a kind of amicable diſpute enſued between the Queen and the Commons. Lord Burleigh, in her name, inſiſted that theſe were matters which touched the prerogative; and, that the Queen had ample authority to rectify grievances of this nature, if applied to by way of petition; upon which the Houſe appointed a committee to attend the Queen, and aſſure her, that their conduct did not proceed from want of duty or reſpect. The Queen received them with the moſt gracious condeſcenſion; and, in her turn, aſſured her loving ſubjects, that ſhe had already given orders for an enquiry into the abuſes attending purveyance, but that the progreſs of it was retarded by the dangers of the Spaniſh invaſion: that, with the advice of her council and judges, ſhe would redreſs every grievance which had crept into the adminiſtration of the courts of juſtice; but could not admit, that the Houſe of Commons, by laws moved without her privity, ſhould deprive her of the honour attending theſe regulations.

In the next parliament application was again made to the Crown, by way of petition, againſt monopolies; which, indeed, appear to have been ſufficiently

ſufficiently oppreſſive:—but the Queen replied, that with regard to theſe patents, ſhe hoped her dutiful and loving ſubjects would not take away her prerogative, which was the chief flower in her garden, and the principal and head pearl in her crown and diadem; but that they would rather leave theſe matters to her diſpoſal. This ſoft, but evaſive anſwer, ſo mollified the untoward and uncourtly diſpoſition of the Houſe, that nothing farther was attempted, till the next parliament, which met in the year 1601, and which was the laſt parliament ſummoned in this reign. By this time, the abuſes of which ſuch repeated complaints had been made, and which it was expected that the Queen would have redreſſed by virtue of her prerogative, had ariſen to an enormous height; and a bill was immediately introduced, for the purpoſe of aboliſhing monopolies:—this meaſure was vehemently oppoſed by the court party, on the old ground, that this matter regarded the prerogative; and that the Queen ought to be applied to, in the way of petition; and ſome very extravagant things were advanced on this occaſion, reſpecting the extent of the regal authority, particularly by Sir Francis Bacon, and other court lawyers, which were properly animadverted upon by ſeveral of the independent members; and when Serjeant Heyne had the aſſurance to aſſert, that the Queen had the ſame right to the lands and goods of the ſubject as to any revenue of her crown, the Houſe hemmed and laughed, and would not ſuffer him to

proceed in his ſpeech.——Upon the whole, it evidently appeared to be the unanimous reſolution of the Houſe, notwithſtanding theſe courtly arguments and harangues, that ſome effectual method ſhould now be taken to put a final period to theſe intolerable oppreſſions: it was urged, that petition after petition had been preſented to no purpoſe, and that nothing leſs than an act of parliament was adequate to the correction of theſe abuſes:—but the excellent underſtanding and never-failing political ſagacity of the Queen once more ſaved her from diſgrace; for, before the bill had paſſed the Commons, ſhe ſent for the Speaker, and commanded him to acquaint the Houſe, that ſhe would immediately cancel theſe obnoxious patents. The Houſe, who, no doubt, entertained a high and juſt ſenſe of the Queen's general character and perſonal merits, and did not without reluctance proceed thus far in their oppoſition, immediately in a formal addreſs, returned their moſt grateful acknowledgments for this extraordinary inſtance of her Majeſty's goodneſs and condeſcenſion; and the Queen, in reply, made new profeſſions of tenderneſs, regard, and attachment to her beloved people. Thus was this critical affair, which the evil genius of a Stuart would quickly have fomented to a ſerious quarrel, happily terminated; and the Queen had the ſatisfaction of parting with her people in parliament, for the laſt time, with all that mutual warmth, and ardour of attachment, which diſtinguiſhed the auſpicious commencement

of

of her reign more than forty years before.——The Queen died in March following, more admired, beloved, and regretted, than perhaps any Sovereign whoſe name is recorded in hiſtory.

Certainly, it muſt be acknowledged, to the immortal honour of the female ſex, that not one of her predeceſſors, at leaſt ſince the days of Alfred, can be placed in any degree of competition with this great princeſs in a political view, whether we conſider the popularity, the wiſdom, or the ſucceſs of her adminiſtration. If an exception can be made in favour of any one of our antient monarchs, I ſhould be inclined to fix upon Edward I. who diſtinguiſhed himſelf by the ſame enlarged and rational views of policy, by the ſame indulgent regard for his people, by the ſame moderation and equity in the internal government of his kingdom, and, it may be added, by the ſame uninterrupted flow of proſperity and ſucceſs: in this only they differ, that in the proſecution of the different objects of their ambition, Edward I. ſhewed but little regard, or rather ſhewed a total diſregard, to every principle of rectitude and juſtice; while the means employed byElizabeth to effect her purpoſes, were, generally ſpeaking, not leſs innocent, and even laudable, than the ends ſhe had in view were great and important. As to Edward III. and Henry V. thoſe heroes of the mob, they appear to me little better than political Quixotes; the pretenſions of theſe princes to the crown of France were utterly ill founded, and even ridiculous; the

the expectation of final ſucceſs in their attempts was highly extravagant, and the accompliſhment of their grand object extremely pernicious, could it for a moment be ſuppoſed attainable. The limits of this Eſſay allow me to touch but very curſorily upon the ſucceeding reigns; certain indications appeared, very early after the acceſſion of the Scottiſh monarch, that new maxims of government were adopted, and new meaſures of obedience were to be exacted. In the very firſt parliament ſummoned by James, he ſcrupled not to aſſert that he was an abſolute king, and that all their privileges were derived from his grant. His extravagant, and even prepoſterous ideas of the nature of the kingly office and authority, diſplayed themſelves by his ſuppoſing, that at his acceſſion peace was *ipſo facto* reſtored between the Engliſh and Spaniſh monarchies, merely becauſe amity ſubſiſted between himſelf and the king of Spain previous to that event. The ſame abſurdity of intellect, operating upon the ſame loftineſs of diſpoſition, led him to confound the union of the two Britiſh crowns, with an union of the two nations; for he maintained, that his ſubjects born in either kingdom after his acceſſion, were of conſequence naturalized in both. He openly aſſerted it to be ſedition in ſubjects to diſpute what a king may do in the height of his power.

Soon after the death of the Earl of Saliſbury, A. D. 1613, a parliament was ſummoned; and the

the loſs of that able miniſter quickly appeared in the raſh and precipitate conduct of the king, who diſſolved the parliament in great wrath, after a very ſhort ſeſſion, before the buſineſs of a ſupply was entered upon, on account of the apparent diſpoſition of the Houſe of Commons to reſtrain certain abuſes of the prerogative. After which he continued to govern for ſome years without parliaments; when, being reduced by his imprudent prodigality to extreme diſtreſs, he was conſtrained to call one in 1621; and though a tolerably good underſtanding ſeemed for a time to prevail between the king and the Commons, ſome grievances being redreſſed on the one part, and ſome ſubſidies voted on the other, a violent rupture ſoon enſued, in conſequence of a remonſtrance which the Houſe had the boldneſs to preſent to the king, reſpecting the buſineſs of the palatinate, and the negotiation now carrying on for the marriage of the Prince of Wales with the Infanta. The king's puſillanimity, with regard to the firſt, had not excited leſs anger and reſentment at home, than deriſion and contempt abroad; and the puritanical ſpirit was now ſo univerſally diffuſed, that the latter was viewed by the whole nation with horror and deteſtation.—The indignation of James at this unexpected and unwelcome interference knew no bounds; he reprimanded the Houſe with great vehemence and acrimony, for preſuming to debate of things ſo far above their reach and capacity; he abſolutely forbad them from meddling with theſe deep matters of

of ſtate, and contemptuouſly applied to them the vulgar proverb, "*Ne ſutor ultra crepidam.*" He condeſcended, however, to aſſure them, that though their privileges were derived from the grace and permiſſion of the ſovereign, yet, as long as they contained themſelves within the limits of their duty, he ſhould maintain them inviolate. The Commons, thrown, as might be expected, into a flame at this treatment, immediately voted, that the liberties, franchiſes, privileges, and immunities of parliament, are the ancient and undoubted birthright and inheritance of the ſubjects of England. The king, on receiving this information, ſent for the journals of the Commons, and with his own hand tore out this reſolution of the Houſe; and, not chuſing to venture another meeting after this outrage, he immediately diſſolved the parliament; after which ſeveral of the moſt popular members were committed to priſon, and a proclamation was iſſued, abſolutely prohibiting all diſcourſe concerning theſe extraordinary proceedings.

Two years after this, however, the Spaniſh alliance being now abandoned, the king, preſſed by his neceſſities, and influenced by Buckingham, who had a war with Spain in contemplation, once more iſſued a ſummons for a new parliament: in his ſpeech at the opening of the ſeſſion, he ſo far deſcended from his former height of loftineſs, and even from that dignified reſerve which ſhould always accompany the regal character, as to ſtate to the Houſe his cauſes of complaint againſt the Spaniſh court, and

and to aſk their advice reſpecting the diſpoſal of his ſon in marriage; that identical point which he had forbid the laſt parliament, in the moſt peremptory manner, to preſume to make the ſubject of their deliberations: he alſo voluntarily offered, that the money voted for the purpoſe of carrying on the propoſed war with Spain ſhould be paid to a committee of parliament, and entruſted entirely to their direction and management; a moſt imprudent conceſſion; and even contrary to the firſt principles of the Engliſh conſtitution. He had now ſufficiently ſhewn his weakneſs and timidity; he had demonſtrated himſelf to be "infirm of purpoſe;" and it required but little ſagacity to ſee the great augmentation of authority and influence which muſt accrue to parliament from ſuch conduct: and no man of common diſcernment could imagine, that the Commons would be induced to relinquiſh the deciſive advantage they had gained, by a recurrence to that haughty and contemptuous mode of treatment, over which they had ſo recently triumphed: in this ſtate of things the king died, and the ſceptre devolved to his ſon Charles; but the hiſtory of this reign is too copious and intereſting for me to enter upon. Suffice it to ſay, what the ſlighteſt knowledge of the memorable events of it will evince, that the arbitrary maxims and ſpeculations of the father were by the ſon, fatally for himſelf, reduced to practice, and viſibly pervaded every department of the government. Mr. Hume himſelf is compelled

to

to acknowledge, that, in numerous inſtances, the laws of the land were openly and notoriouſly violated; "liberty was totally ſubverted, and an arbitrary and deſpotic authority exerciſed over the kingdom." Upon what grounds, then, can this able and eloquent apologiſt undertake to vindicate or extenuate the enormity of ſuch a conduct? Why, he pretends truly, "that the grievances which "were ſo much the ſubject of complaint, when "conſidered in themſelves without regard to the "conſtitution, ſcarcely deſerve the name; nor "were they either burdenſome on the people's pro-"perties, or anywiſe ſhocking to the natural huma-"nity of mankind." Indeed! I know not what degree of barbarity and oppreſſion might be neceſſary to ſhock the humanity of Mr. Hume: but I believe there are few perſons ſo deſtitute of humanity, as not to be ſhocked at the recital of thoſe facts, which he himſelf has given us in the chapter immediately preceding this very curious and profound obſervation. Nor can I eaſily comprehend how it ſhould happen, that the illegal impoſitions and extortions of Charles were not burdenſome on the people's properties;—but, waving theſe conſiderations, I will beg leave to aſk, how it is poſſible to reconcile this aſſertion with the repreſentations which he has uniformly made of the abject and deplorable ſituation of this kingdom, under the government of Elizabeth. It certainly cannot be doubted, but that Elizabeth acted conformably to the prevailing ideas of her own times; or, in other

other words, ſhe is not chargeable with a violation of the forms of the conſtitution, as it then ſubſiſted. I think alſo it will be univerſally admitted, that the actual grievances of her reign were not more intolerable than thoſe ſuffered under Charles; but it ſeems the grievances of Charles's reign ſcarcely deſerve the name. Then I aſk, Wherein conſiſts the culpability of Elizabeth? or, What foundation is there for thoſe ſevere animadverſions upon the arbitrary, the imperious, the tyrannical diſpoſition and conduct of that princeſs? or, In what reſpect are we of the preſent generation, in a more eligible ſituation, or in happier circumſtances, than the abject and ſlaviſh race that exiſted two hundred years ago? Theſe things appear to me rather paradoxical; and I think it would require all the ingenuity of Mr. Hume to reconcile them to each other, and to frame out of them one general conſiſtent hypotheſis. The truth is, his eager deſire of apologizing for the miſconduct of the princes of the houſe of Stuart, has unfortunately made him take ſuch indefatigable pains to caſt a ſhade over the character of Elizabeth, and to brighten the dark traits of the ſucceeding reigns, that when he attempts to trace the connection of events, and to account for the uninterrupted harmony and felicity ſubſiſting under the adminiſtration of the one, and the univerſal odium and perpetual diſcord attached to that of the others, he has precluded himſelf from diſplaying, in their proper colours, thoſe cauſes which had the

the principal influence in producing thoſe remarkable effects which he cannot but admit, and for which, upon the ground he has thought proper to occupy, it is abſolutely impoſſible to account. The erroneous repreſentation he has exhibited of this period of our hiſtory, I look upon as the fundamental fault of a work, every page of which preſents us with new beauties. The fact is, that the grievances ſuſtained by the ſubjects under the reign of Elizabeth, as well as her ſucceſſors, were very far from being trifling or imaginary; but a moſt ſtriking difference may be diſcovered in this reſpect, that the ſeverities of the Queen's reign, juſtly as they would now be reprobated, were at that time conſidered as the effect of a ſtrong and real political neceſſity. Or at moſt, if the Queen was chargeable with ſome abuſes of prerogative, ſhe had the ſenſe and prudence to avoid all poſitive violations of eſtabliſhed privileges; and as the great body of the people were never alarmed with apprehenſions of deſigns inimical to the public happineſs, the whiſpers of individuals were loſt amidſt the loud acclamations attending her proſperous and popular adminiſtration. But with reſpect to Charles, the whole tenor of his conduct evinced, that the great ſpring of all his actions, was an eager and intemperate deſire to emancipate himſelf from every ſpecies of control, and he ventured to purſue his dangerous projects even while labouring under an univerſal odium, and at a time when the weak and arbitrary conduct of his father

father had occaſioned the principles of government to be more canvaſſed and much better underſtood, and all ranks of people were making daily acceſſions of power and conſequence, as well as knowledge, and actually went far greater lengths in oppoſition to the eſtabliſhed laws than Elizabeth, or even than Henry VIII. himſelf had ever done in the moſt elevated ſtate of his authority!—Surely, then, we may ceaſe to wonder at the tragical events which ſucceeded. However, I am happy to do this monarch the juſtice to acknowledge, that he had, previous to the commencement of the civil war, made every conceſſion that could reaſonably be deſired; nay, it may be juſtly affirmed, that in giving his aſſent to the perpetuity act, he not only annihilated his own power, but ſubverted the conſtitution; and from that fatal æra, the houſe of Commons demonſtrated, by almoſt every meaſure they adopted, that they had an intereſt of their own, ſeparate from, and very often contrary to, the general intereſts of the people they were choſen to repreſent.

There is yet another point of view, in which Elizabeth may, with great advantage, be ſet in competition with her immediate ſucceſſors; and that is, 3dly, Her perſonal character and diſpoſition. Her extreme affability, and gracious deportment, which ſhe never ſuffered to degenerate, like her ſucceſſor James, to a low and groſs familiarity, were highly acceptable to the people; and, no doubt, formed one great ſource of her

unbounded popularity.——It is remarkable, that Charles II. that "Monſter of a King," as Pope ſtiles him, is ſtill regarded in a very favourable light by the generality of people, from the ſtrong impreſſion which his faſcinating manners, the charms of his addreſs and converſation, originally made on the minds of the public. The total want of dignity and decorum in James, and the frozen formality, and more than Spaniſh ſtatelineſs, of Charles, occaſioned extreme diſguſt, and expoſed them to real inconvenience; but if we contemplate the generoſity and magnanimity of Elizabeth, the ſuperiority of her character will, I think, be ſtill more apparent. To mention a few inſtances: In the reign of her ſiſter Mary ſhe had been committed to the cuſtody of Sir Henry Bedingfield, who treated her with extreme harſhneſs and ſeverity: but the only revenge taken by the Queen, after her acceſſion to the crown, was, to give him, in her uſual diſcourſe, the appellation of her gaoler: emulating in this inſtance the noble pride of Lewis XII. who on a ſimilar occaſion, thought it beneath the dignity of a King of France, to revenge the quarrels of a Duke of Orleans. Notwithſtanding the regret with which the Engliſh nation ſaw Calais fall into the hands of the French, the Queen poſitively refuſed to liſten to the inſidious overtures of the French court, who offered immediate reſtitution, if ſhe would recall her troops, and deſiſt from all further interference in the affairs of Scotland. Without heſitation, ſhe firmly replied, that ſhe would not ſacrifice the intereſts

intereſts of her kingdom, for the ſake of a paltry fiſhing town.

Though it muſt be acknowledged, that ſhe was by no means exempt from the foibles of her ſex, as the curious anecdotes preſerved by Melville and other writers fully evince; and though amongſt her courtiers there were ſome whom ſhe diſtinguiſhed with peculiar marks of her favour; yet the diſgraceful recall of Leiceſter from the Netherlands, and the fatal cataſtrophe of Eſſex, plainly prove, how much the Queen predominated over the woman: but the blind partiality of her ſucceſſors James and Charles for their minions Somerſet and Buckingham, was as pernicious as it was ridiculous. When offered, nay ſolicited to accept, the ſovereignty of the United Provinces, ſhe had the greatneſs of mind to reject the propoſal, ſatisfied with the glory of being their protectreſs and friend. The treaty of marriage with the Duke of Anjou gave occaſion to a moſt manly and ſpirited letter to the Queen, from Sir P. Sydney, ſtating, in very ſtrong terms, the inſuperable objections to that alliance, which even in our times would be thought a very uncommon liberty; but this ſhe took in good part; and the negociation was ſoon after entirely broken off.—But it is ſtill more worthy of remark, that during the time this treaty was depending, the Queen being one day in her barge on the Thames, with Simier the French agent, and others of her court, a ſhot was fired by a man ſtanding upon the oppoſite ſhore,

which paſſed very near the Queen, and wounded one of the bargemen. After a ſtrict examination, no proof of treaſonable intention appearing, the Queen ordered him to be ſet at liberty, declaring, that ſhe never would give credit to an accuſation againſt any one of her ſubjects, which a mother would not believe of her own children. If no other memorial than this was left us of Queen Elizabeth, methinks, this alone would be ſufficient to immortalize and embalm her memory. What reſolution and ſpirit did ſhe exhibit, when the whole nation was in alarm at the proſpect of a Spaniſh invaſion! With all the heroiſm of a Boadicea, ſhe put herſelf at the head of her army, profeſſing her firm purpoſe to lead them herſelf into the field, and rather to periſh in battle than ſurvive the ruin and ſlavery of her people. "Let tyrants "fear, ſaid ſhe; I have always ſo behaved myſelf, "that, under GOD, I have placed my chiefeſt "ſtrength and ſafeguard in the loyal hearts and "goodwill of my ſubjects. I know I am but a "a weak and feeble woman, but I have the heart "of a King, and of a King of England too; and "think foul ſcorn, that Parma or Spain, or any "prince in Europe, ſhould dare to invade the bor-"ders of my realms." By the way, it may be remarked, here is a pretty clear intimation of the ſuperiority of England to the ſurrounding nations; a ſuperiority ariſing, no doubt, from the peculiar privileges and immunites which had been tranſmitted down from their anceſtors, and of which their free

free form of government would not ſuffer them to be deprived.

Upon the diſcovery of that conſpiracy in which the Queen of Scots was ſo deeply concerned, and for which ſhe juſtly paid the forfeit of her life, many letters from different Engliſh noblemen were found in her cabinet, containing ſtrong profeſſions of their attachment to that princeſs. Of theſe the Queen would take no notice, and by this generous policy converted many of her ſecret enemies into real friends. Lord Chancellor Bacon relates, that certain inſtructions being tranſmitted to the Engliſh Reſident at Paris, the Secretary of State had inſerted a clauſe, that the Ambaſſador, in order to ingratiate himſelf with the Queen mother the famous Catharine of Medicis, ſhould take occaſion to ſay, that theſe two princeſſes, the Queens of England and France, for experience and ſkill in the arts of government, were equal to the greateſt monarchs; but Elizabeth, indignant at this compariſon, immediately ordered the direction to be eraſed, ſaying that ſhe had uſed quite different arts and methods of government.

I have always regarded the liberty which Shakeſpeare ventured to take with the character of Henry the VIII. in the lifetime of his daughter, as a ſtriking proof of the mild and moderate, or rather the magnanimous, ſpirit of her government: it is ſuch a liberty as certainly would not now be allowed, whatever advances may have been made in the general ſyſtem of liberty in this country. To add no more,

ſhe gave a ſignal inſtance how much ſhe roſe ſuperior to the fears and jealouſies incident to weak minds, in the propoſal ſhe made to the States of Scotland, to educate the young King at her own coſt and at her own court, no doubt, as preſumptive heir to the Crown. A remarkable contraſt to the conduct of Queen Anne, who, in circumſtances nearly ſimilar, could never endure the idea of ſeeing her ſucceſſor, whoſe reſidence in England would, as ſhe declared, keep the image of her coffin perpetually before her eyes.

It would be an endleſs and invidious taſk, to adduce particular inſtances of the folly, weakneſs, meanneſs, and pride, of the Scottiſh line of monarchs; if any one is diſpoſed to vindicate them from theſe imputations, let him produce inſtances of their wiſdom, generoſity, and magnanimity; for my part, I know of none. The Kings of the Houſe of Stuart ſeem to have been utterly incapable of that elevation of mind which caſt ſo great a ſplendour over the character of their illuſtrious predeceſſor. The behaviour of Charles I. at his trial and execution may be thought an exception, and he certainly, upon that occaſion, exhibited remarkable proofs of firmneſs and calm reſignation; ſo did the unfortunate Mary, his grandmother, at Fotheringay Caſtle; ſo did his deſcendant James, at the Abbey of La Trappe: but theſe are not inſtances of that mental dignity of which I am now ſpeaking, but of a certain natural courage, and inherent fortitude, which the manifold difficulties

difficulties and diſtreſſes in which that infatuated family have been involved, have given them frequent opportunities of demonſtrating that they are by no means deſtitute of.

There are two obſervations which I think it proper to make before I conclude, in order to render complete juſtice to the character of Elizabeth. The firſt is, that there is no real foundation for the charge of avarice, ſo often urged by the enemies of Elizabeth, and ſo injurious to her reputation. To this charge it may be replied, that in the reign of Elizabeth the revenues of the crown were extremely circumſcribed, and parliament was not then in the habit of giving away millions in a breath; her œconomy was the pillar which ſupported her authority and independency. Nevertheleſs, it is allowed that ſhe lived in a ſtile of great magnificence, far ſuperior, certainly, to what the wretched appearance of the Britiſh court in our days can afford us any idea of. She cleared the crown, in a few years, of the heavy debts contracted by her father, brother, and ſiſter; ſhe remitted great ſums, at different times, to Scotland, to Holland, and to France: the debt due from Holland alone amounted at her death, to no leſs than 800,000l. for which ſhe generouſly agreed to take no intereſt.—The money advanced to Henry IV. ſhe could never recover, being lent without adequate ſecurity; though that monarch, in a few years after the peace of Vervins, had amaſſed a great treaſure;

and the Queen repreſented, in the ſtrongeſt terms, the neceſſity to which ſhe was reduced, by her long wars with Spain, and the Iriſh rebellion. She even went ſo far, as actually to refuſe ſubſidies, when ſhe had not immediate occaſion for the money. Theſe are facts which will admit of no diſpute, and may be ſet in oppoſition to a thouſand trifling ſtories of her too cloſe attention to certain minute articles of expence: that a ſelfiſh or avaricious diſpoſition ſhould be capable of ſuch acts of generoſity, is a moral impoſſibility.

The ſecond obſervation I have to make is, that the Queen does not appear to me by any means ſo culpable in the affair of Davidſon as ſhe is generally repreſented. It would require a pamphlet inſtead of a paragraph to enter into a full diſcuſſion of this queſtion. I ſhall only ſay, that Davidſon appears to me much more the dupe of Burleigh than of Elizabeth. It ſeems evident, that the Secretary, at the ſuggeſtion of that nobleman, diſpatched the warrant for the execution of the unfortunate Mary without the previous knowledge of the Queen, who could not be brought to a final determination upon the matter.

That her aſtoniſhment, anger, and indignation, were real, not aſſumed, appears from ſeveral circumſtances. When the fatal intelligence was communicated, her countenance, Camden tells us, changed, her ſpeech faultered, and ſhe ſtood fixed, for ſome minutes, like a ſtatue, till at length

length her paſſion vented itſelf in a violent burſt of tears: if this was diſſimulation, it muſt be confeſſed ſhe had made a wonderful proficiency in that ſcience indeed. Again, it is not pretended that the Queen's diſpoſition led her to unneceſſary acts of injuſtice and cruelty; yet Davidſon was not only puniſhed with great ſeverity at the time, but he never could recover, in the ſmalleſt degree, any ſhare of the Queen's favour and regard, when it could no longer anſwer any end to keep up the political farce. Even Burleigh himſelf, Davidſon's principal adviſer on this occaſion, received ſuch convincing proofs of the reality of the Queen's reſentment, that he gave himſelf up for loſt, and in great conſternation begged permiſſion to reſign his employments and retire to his eſtate in the country.

This plainly proves, that Burleigh's advice to Davidſon was given, not with any expectation of making his court to the Queen, to whoſe ſentiments he cannot be ſuppoſed a ſtranger; but with a view to his own intereſt and ſecurity, which he never could be perfectly aſſured of as long as the Queen of Scots was in being. We have alſo the Queen's own ſolemn aſſeveration and appeal to God, in her letter to King James on the occaſion, that this tranſaction paſſed without her knowledge or intention. "She could never, ſurely, ſhe affirms, be eſteemed ſo baſe and poor ſpirited, as that if ſhe had really given orders for this

this fatal execution, ſhe could on any conſideration be induced to deny them. Though ſenſible of the juſtice of the ſentence, ſhe had determined from motives of clemency not to carry it into effect, and could not but highly reſent the temerity of thoſe who had diſappointed her merciful intentions." Upon the whole, it ſeems to me moſt probable, that the miniſters of Elizabeth, I mean Burleigh, Walſingham, and Leiceſter, to whom the death of the Queen of Scots was "a conſummation devoutly to be wiſhed," not being able to bring Elizabeth to a firm and ſettled reſolution on that point, ventured to encourage Davidſon to ſend off the warrant for execution without her knowledge; hoping, perhaps, that ſhe would in her heart not be much diſpleaſed with their preſumption, or, at the worſt, in conſequence of the ſnare laid for the unfortunate Secretary, it was foreſeen that the chief weight of the Queen's reſentment would fall upon him; and they depended upon their own addreſs, and the degree of royal favour they enjoyed, to ſcreen them from any violent or laſting effects of the Queen's diſpleaſure. If it can be ſuppoſed that the Queen herſelf was a party in this plot againſt Davidſon, it muſt be allowed that her conduct in this inſtance was in the higheſt degree diſgraceful, barbarous, and unjuſt; but ſo far as I am able to form a judgment of her diſpoſition, ſhe was not capable of ſuch a degree of depravity and deceit; nor do I think there is ſufficient ground to charge her

her with ſullying, by an action of ſuch complicated baſeneſs, that illuſtrious character to which I have paid this willing, but inadequate, tribute of applauſe and admiration.

ESSAY IV.

On CHRISTIANITY.

PART I.

THE critical and intereſting ſituation in which mankind are placed, naturally prompts them to a thouſand different enquiries and inveſtigations, which are either immediately or remotely connected with that regard to our own happineſs which is the grand ſpring of all our actions. Of theſe it muſt be acknowledged, that no one can merit a greater degree of attention than the queſtion reſpecting the truth of the Chriſtian religion. The life of man is ſo ſhort and tranſient, and the evidence which reaſon affords of a continuation, or renovation, of our thinking powers in another ſtate, ſo feeble and defective, that the authenticity of a religion, the fundamental article of which is a general reſurrection to an immortal life, is a matter of the utmoſt moment and conſequence. Many other religions there are, indeed, in the world, which make ſimilar pretences to a divine original; but happily they include in them ſuch groſs and palpable

palpable violations of ſenſe and conſiſtency, and are ſo totally unaccompanied by any kind of evidence, that they ſcarcely demand or admit of a formal refutation. Chriſtianity alone, of all the various religions of the univerſe which advance theſe ſupernatural claims, can ever attract the ſerious regard of anintelligent and enlightened mind; and though very plauſible and ſpecious, nay, though very ſubtle and cogent objections have been urged againſt even this religion, it muſt be admitted, by the ingenuous and candid infidel himſelf, that it is ſupported by an appearance at leaſt of proof ſufficient to perplex, if not to ſatisfy the judgment, to confound, if not to convince the underſtanding.—It is, however, undeniable, that many of the greateſt geniuſes which the world has ever produced, in the moſt enlightened age which that world has ever known, and in a country where freedom of enquiry has been purſued to the utmoſt poſſible extent, have not ſcrupled to avow their firm perſuaſion of the truth of this religion, and of the force and ſufficiency of that evidence by which it is ſupported. Need I mention the illuſtrious names of NEWTON, LOCKE, MILTON, BACON, BOYLE, CLARKE, ADDISON, or HARTLEY, in proof of this aſſertion? Will any one venture to object to the competency of theſe judges? Are they deficient in knowledge, in underſtanding, or impartiality? or can they be accuſed of giving only a ſlight and curſory attention to the ſubject? No, in ſuch minds, a firm and permanent conviction can be the reſult of nothing

nothing leſs than a full and accurate inveſtigation, of which their writings afford ample proof. Is it poſſible then, without a mixture of indignation and contempt, to hear the fops and witlings of the age attempt to turn that to ridicule, which the beſt and wiſeſt of mankind have agreed to regard as ſacred? This inſignificant race of beings cannot be thought, indeed, deſerving of much attention; but it is truly painful to a generous and liberal mind, to ſee ſuch writers as a Hume, a Gibbon, or a Voltaire, attacking by ſly inſinuations, contemptuous ſneers, or ambiguous innuendoes, that religion, which not only permits, but which dares and invites, the moſt accurate inveſtigation, and the cloſeſt ſcrutiny. No one, indeed, who is poſſeſſed of any conſiderable ſtrength or energy of mind, will be much influenced by theſe unfair and diſingenuous artifices; but the danger is, leſt men of inferior capacity, and more circumſcribed underſtandings, ſhould apprehend, that they may incur ſome degree of mental degradation by embracing that religion which was profeſſed and defended by NEWTON and LOCKE. My intention is, in the preſent Eſſay, which may, poſſibly, fall into the hands of ſome who are not very deeply verſed in Newton or Locke, to ſtate a few of the leading arguments in favour of Chriſtianity; and, in a ſucceeding one, I may, perhaps, conſider a few of the more plauſible objections to which it ſeems liable: and I ſhall begin, with offering ſuch obſervations as occur to me on the expreſs, poſi-

tive,

tive, and direct teſtimony we have of the life and miracles of Jeſus Chriſt, the great founder of the Chriſtian religion; and it is to be preſumed, that no one will be ſceptical enough to diſpute, that in the reigns of Auguſtus and Tiberius a very eminent and extraordinary perſon was born and flouriſhed in Judea, who laid claim to divine communications, who was the founder of a religious ſect or ſociety, and who ſuffered crucifixion under the government of Pontius Pilate the Roman procurator.

This being premiſed, we are to conſider, upon what authority the diſciples and followers of Jeſus aſſerted, that he was what he profeſſed to be, viz. a prophet ſent from GOD; and if we call in queſtion the truth of their teſtimony, we have our choice of this alternative—either they were dupes or impoſtors, either they were deceived themſelves, or the intentional deceivers of others. In vain do infidels exclaim, that this is an alternative applicable to all the religions that ever exiſted upon earth, and that they are under no obligation to aſcertain the exact proportions of knavery and folly of which this or any other religion may be compounded. Of other religions, indeed, the knavery and the folly are fully apparent; nor is it material to determine, how far the one or the other may predominate; but with reſpect to Chriſtianity, not the moſt diſtant ſymptom appears of either; and this provoking and perplexing dilemma ſtill remains, and ever will remain,

remain, in full force and vigour. It cannot be pretended, that the apoſtles were impoſed upon, with regard to thoſe facts which compoſe the ſubſtance of their hiſtories: however groſs their education or their underſtandings may be repreſented, and however ſtrong the deluſions of ignorance and folly may in ſome caſes be, it was totally impoſſible for them, if they were not abſolutely inſane, to ſuppoſe that they ſaw the blind reſtored to ſight, the deaf to hearing, the dumb to ſpeech, the ſick to health, and even the dead to life, if no ſuch events took place: and leaſt of all is it poſſible they ſhould believe, that Chriſt himſelf appeared to them three days after his public crucifixion, death and burial; that they maintained a ſocial and friendly intercourſe with him for forty days after his reſurrection; and that they were afterwards eye-witneſſes of his aſcenſion to heaven, if theſe things were not really ſo. In a word, this branch of the alternative is ſo glaringly and monſtrouſly abſurd, that no man in his ſenſes can conſider it as capable of being defended; ſo that it may ſafely be pronounced, that if Chriſtianity is an impoſture, the apoſtles themſelves were parties in that impoſture; and guilty of inventing a fraudulent ſcheme, and of impoſing upon the credulity and weakneſs of mankind; but this ſuppoſition is clogged with ſuch inſuperable difficulties, that it is ſcarcely more tenable than the former. The enquiry that moſt obviouſly preſents itſelf on this occaſion is, What motive could they have for this

this extraordinary attempt. As to Christ himself, it appears that he made, from the first, his own sufferings and death an essential part of his plan; differing in this, at least, from all other impostors that have appeared in the world: and after that event had taken place, his disciples and followers renounced all selfish considerations, sacrificed all their temporal prospects, for the sake of that religion which, according to this hypothesis, they knew to be false; which subjected them to numberless calamities; which was wholly destitute of evidence, and which therefore they laboured to propagate with scarcely a possibility of success; which was attended with ridicule, disgrace, difficulty, and danger; but to which they were so much attached, that they scrupled not to lay down their lives with composure, nay with alacrity and triumph in support of it, and upon every occasion to seal their testimony with their blood. Can we suppose, that a being so constituted as man should act a part so opposite to all his natural feelings, sentiments, and passions? For every effect there must certainly be an adequate cause; but, who will pretend to assign any probable or possible cause for a conduct so absurd, so unnatural, so unaccountable? Well might the poet exclaim,

Whence but from Heav'n, could men unskill'd in arts,
In different nations born, in different parts,
Weave such agreeing truths? or how, or why
Should all conspire to cheat us with a lie?
Unask'd their pains, ungrateful their advice,
Starving their gains, and martyrdom their price?

Dryden.

But a ſtill more extraordinary circumſtance, if poſſible, is, that notwithſtanding men were deterred by every conceivable motive from embracing this religion; notwithſtanding the manifold dangers, and difficulties attending a public profeſſion of it; notwithſtanding its total defect in point of evidence; converts were every day added to the number of Chriſt's diſciples, and in a few years ſymptoms appeared of a ſpeedy and general diffuſion of Chriſtianity over all the provinces of the Roman empire. I ſpeak of this religion as being totally deſtitute of evidence; for, upon the ſuppoſition I am combating, the apoſtles had none to offer; they had the weakneſs and imprudence, indeed, to appeal to certain ancient predictions, which, as they pretended, had now received their accompliſhment: they had the unparalleled aſſurance to reſt the truth of their religion upon recent miracles performed by Chriſt in the preſence of all the people of Judea, but for which, excepting themſelves, not a ſingle voucher could be found; and upon their own aſſertion, which, after ſuch convincing proof of their frenzy and extravagance, one would imagine was not likely to obtain much credit, that Jeſus Chriſt was riſen from the dead. Here then is another inexplicable phenomenon; for my part, at leaſt, I do not poſſeſs a ſufficient knowledge of the human mind to be capable of explaining how Chriſtianity, in ſuch circumſtances, could make any degree of progreſs in the world, much leſs how it was poſſible

that

that ſuch numbers of intelligent and reflecting perſons ſhould be induced to embrace it. A late celebrated hiſtorian has indeed attempted to account for this aſtoniſhing fact upon natural principles; but it is obvous to remark, that the cauſes he enumerates imply a previous ſtate of things, in which a firm faith in Chriſtianity prevailed amongſt the profeſſors of it: this faith muſt have originated in evidence of ſome kind or other; and the grand difficulty ſtill remains unſolved,—what that evidence was, and upon what foundation that faith reſted. Let Mr. G. aſcribe whatever influence he pleaſes to his ſecondary cauſes, as a philoſopher, he will allow us, I preſume, to conſider thoſe cauſes as themſelves produced by ſome preceding cauſe, and he will, I hope, permit us quickly to enjoy the deluſion, that the truth of Chriſtianity will better account for the exiſtence of thoſe cauſes than the falſehood of it. What progreſs, to Mr. G. himſelf we appeal, would Mahometaniſm have made in that enlightened age, unconnected with motives of ambition or intereſt, truſting entirely to its own evidence for ſucceſs, and propoſing that evidence under every poſſible diſadvantage? Under ſuch circumſtances the intemperate zeal of the profeſſors, together with all the terrible threats and magnificent promiſes contained in the Koran, would doubtleſs have made little impreſſion on the minds of thinking and intelligent perſons, who would eaſily diſcover, if called upon to inveſtigate, the extreme weakneſs and futility of its lofty pretenſions. The

doctrine of a future ſtate, it has been well obſerved, was not a novelty firſt promulgated by Chriſt; it was the doctrine of Plato and of Socrates five hundred years previous to his incarnation. Why then did it not produce equal conviction? For this reaſon only, becauſe it was not attended by equal evidence.

I ſhall next endeavour to exhibit, as concifely as poſſible, the argument from prophecy on which Chriſtians in general juſtly lay an equal ſtreſs, and on which the whole fabric of Chriſtianity depends for ſupport. It is an unqueſtionable fact, then, that in certain ancient writings, which the Jewiſh nation had long been accuſtomed to regard as ſacred, plain intimations were given, that a very great and extraordinary perſon would make his appearance in the world previous to the political ſubverſion of that ſtate; various circumſtances relative to the place of his birth, his family, his character, his office, the events of his life, and the manner of his death, are clearly ſpecified. In Jeſus, the author of the Chriſtian religion, only can it be pretended that theſe predictions have received their accompliſhment, and in him they centre as the rays of the ſun in a focus, with a degree of ſtrength and luſtre which is truly aſtoniſhing. The ſubſequent predictions of Chriſt himſelf and his apoſtles, particularly of the apoſtle Paul, deſcribing in the moſt expreſs and unambiguous language the nature and extent of that grand apoſtacy which has actually taken place in the

the Chriſtian church, are of ſuch a nature as muſt, I think, impreſs conviction on every mind not previouſly biaſſed by the moſt unreaſonable prejudice. The narrow limits I have preſcribed to myſelf will not allow me to attempt to traverſe this mighty maze; but there are two conſiderations, connected with the prophetic branch of evidence, which I cannot wholly omit to mention. The firſt is, the preſent ſtate and circumſtances of the Jewiſh nation. The Jewiſh prophets have unanimouſly aſſerted, and Chriſtianity conſequently ſuppoſes, a general reſtoration of that people to their own country, where they may again perhaps become the medium of the divine communications to the reſt of mankind. Now it muſt be allowed, that the bare poſſibility of the fulfilment of a prediction of this nature is itſelf a moſt ſingular and extraordinary circumſtance. Two thouſand years ago the nation of the Jews, a petty Arabian horde, as they have been contemptuouſly ſtyled, were conquered by the Babylonians, a great and powerful people, and carried far away into captivity; and though it might naturally be expected, that they would in proceſs of time have coaleſced with their conquerors, and have been ultimately abſorbed and annihilated by the union, the fact is, that, diſperſed and ſcattered as they have almoſt ever ſince been over the face of the globe, they have never, perhaps, in a ſingle inſtance, in any country, loſt their religous or national diſtinctions, and they are now generally ſuppoſed to be as

numerous as before the Babylonian, or, as ſome think, even the Aſſyrian captivity. This is perfectly amazing; it is contrary to all hiſtory, and all experience of the courſe of human affairs in ſimilar caſes; it has been boldly and not improperly ſtyled a ſtanding miracle. Within one thouſand or twelve hundred years back, a great variety of extraordinary and important revolutions have taken place among the nations of Europe. In our own country, the Britons were conquered by the Saxons, the Saxons by the Danes, and the Danes and Saxons by the Normans; but in a few centuries theſe oppoſite and hoſtile nations were conſolidated into one indiſtinguiſhable maſs. A part of the Britiſh nation indeed, by retiring into an inacceſſible and mountainous country, and ſecluding themſelves from the reſt of the iſland, has retained its language and nationality, though not its religion, to the preſent time; but this cannot be looked upon as in any degree analogous to the ſtate of the Jews.

Italy, about the ſame time that Britain was ſubdued by the Saxons, was conquered by the Goths and Vandals; and it is not eaſy to conceive a more ſtriking contraſt, than that which ſubſiſted between the poliſhed inhabitants of that delightful country, and their ſavage invaders; and yet how ſoon did all diſtinction ceaſe between them! In France, the Roman colonies gradually aſſimilated with the ancient Gauls; and in Spain, though the Moors continued for ſeveral ages, and till

till their final expulſion, a diſtinct people, after they were once reduced to a ſtate of ſubmiſſion and ſubjection their numbers very ſenſibly diminiſhed; and there is no room to doubt, but that they would in courſe of time have mingled with the general maſs: but with regard to the Jews, the wonder is, that though they do not in any country where they are ſettled bear any proportion to the natural inhabitants, though they are univerſally reduced to a ſtate of the loweſt ſubjection, and even expoſed to hatred, contempt, and perſecution; yet in no inſtance does there ſeem to be any appearance or probability of diminution with reſpect to their numbers, in no inſtance do they diſcover any decay of attachment to their religious principles. According to the beſt information I could ever obtain from hiſtory, the ſituation of the Jews is abſolutely without example; but it ſhould at the ſame time be remembered, that the reality of a miraculous interpoſition reſpecting this nation by no means depends upon the proving it to be ſtrictly *unique*; that this ſituation is uncommon and extraordinary will be readily admitted, and yet, extraordinary as it may be deemed, it is perfectly conformable to thoſe antient oracles and prophecies which have always been regarded by them as ſacred and divine. The caſe of the remaining deſcendants of the ancient Britons is likewiſe, undoubtedly, very remarkable and ſingular; but it by no means amounts to a proof, or even a preſumption, of a

ſupernatural interpoſition; but if it could be proved, that the preſent condition and circumſtances of that people were the ſubject of clear and expreſs predictions pronounced two thouſand years ago, then indeed we might well ſuppoſe, and I think we muſt unavoidable ſuppoſe, the intervention of a ſagacity and foreſight more than human; and this is the concluſion which muſt unavoidably reſult from an impartial conſideration of the peculiar and unprecedented ſituation of the Jewiſh nation, taken in connection with thoſe antient prophecies which either expreſs or imply it.

The ſecond obſervation I have to make is this: It is evident, from the expreſs declarations of Chriſt and his apoſtles, that Chriſtianity was originally deſtined, as indeed it is calculated, for an univerſal religion: this event is the ſubject of numerous prophecies. Now it is truly remarkable, that the preſent ſituation of things in the world is ſuch, that there ſeems a ſtrong probability, if we reaſon merely from the regular operation of moral cauſes, that the time will come when Chriſtianity ſhall be diffuſed throughout the univerſe. Thoſe nations which have embraced the Chriſtian religion have acquired ſo complete an aſcendency over the reſt of mankind, that as it is utterly incredible on the one hand that they themſelves ſhould be induced to forſake the religion of their anceſtors, and to adopt any other ſyſtem from nations comparatively illiterate and barbarous; ſo, on the other hand, it ſeems perfectly

fectly conſonant to the uſual courſe of human events, that as the arts, the arms, and the learning of Europe are every day making ſome progreſs, the religion of Europe will alſo gradually extend itſelf; and as to the important but accidental circumſtance of its being profeſſed by that part of the globe which has obtained ſo prodigious and deciſive a ſuperiority, it poſſeſſes the intrinſic advantage of an appearance of evidence, at leaſt, as well as moral excellence, far beyond that of any religion which can be oppoſed to it, what can be the reſult of a conteſt ſo circumſtanced, but the final downfal of thoſe various ſyſtems of ſuperſtition and abſurdity which at preſent prevail in the world? A long ſucceſſion of ages muſt no doubt elapſe previous to this glorious conſummation; but if we conſider the different aſpect which Chriſtianity wears at preſent, from that which it preſented two or three centuries ago; if we conſider the prodigious improvements which have been made during this period in every branch of human knowledge; if we conſider with how much greater facility that knowledge is now capable of being communicated; if we conſider the mutual intercourſe which is eſtabliſhed, and the intimate connections which ſubſiſt, between the moſt diſtant parts of the globe; if we conſider the ardent and enterpriſing ſpirit by which the European nations are animated; the ſurpriſing effects which that ſpirit has already produced, and the ſtill more wonderful effects which it is calculated

calculated to produce; it will not appear to a reflecting mind incredible or improbable, that Chriſtianity, abſtracted from the idea of a particular ſuperintending providence, will inſenſibly prevail over all oppoſition, and ultimately become the univerſal religion of mankind. But is it poſſible that a few illiterate impoſtors, or, at beſt, enthuſiaſts, ſhould frame a religious ſyſtem which thus bids fair to deſcend to the lateſt generations, bidding defiance to the united attacks of wit, learning, and malice? Is it poſſible that the original author of this wonderful deluſion, the man who bled on Calvary, ſhould be acknowledged as the immediate delegate of heaven, commiſſioned to execute the purpoſes of divine compaſſion and mercy, by thoſe who may be reaſonably ſuppoſed both able and willing to detect and expoſe the fraud, however cunningly deviſed, by the wiſeſt and beſt of mankind, by the moſt enlightened geniuſes of the moſt enlightened ages and countries? This is monſtrous and incredible; a thing paſt all comprehenſion and belief: it is impoſſible that an impoſture framed, under ſuch circumſtances, could endure the teſt of a ſerious and impartial diſcuſſion; if a forgery, it muſt be a groſs and palpable one, ſuch as no man of ſenſe or reflection could heſitate for a moment whether to receive or reject. What a paradox for the enemies of Chriſtianity to ſolve! that a religion, which they affirm to be totally deſtitute of evidence, ſhould have prevailed over ſuch potent oppoſition,

and

and ſhould ſtill go on, conquering and to conquer, by the mere force of evidence.

But thirdly, Independent of the proofs ariſing from teſtimony, and from prophecy, there is another argument which has often been urged by the advocates of Chriſtianity with great ſucceſs; and that is, the intrinſic excellence of our holy religion. This has been generally diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of the *internal evidence* of Chriſtianity; and of this a ſtriking view has been given by an elegant and juſtly admired writer of our own times. I do not profeſs, indeed, to approve, much leſs to vindicate, all that Mr. Jenyns has thought proper to advance in that popular performance. I do not, for my own part, ſee how the divinity of any conteſted doctrine can be inferred from its "contrariety to "every principle of human reaſon, as well as to "all our ideas of the divine attributes." I content myſelf with inferring the divine origin of Chriſtianity from its perfect conſonancy, to the principles of natural religion, and to thoſe ideas which reaſon teaches us to entertain of the ſupreme Being; not that I mean to countenance the opinion, that Chriſtianity is as old as the creation, or that unaſſiſted reaſon was capable of demonſtrating thoſe ſublime truths which conſtitute the fundamental articles of the Chriſtian faith; but my meaning is, that Chriſtianity is ſuch a revelation as reaſon would teach us to hope for,

and

and with gratitude and joy to receive; it confirms thoſe exalted ideas which reaſon taught ſome of her moſt favoured votaries to entertain of the being and perfections of a God, of the reality of a future ſtate of exiſtence, of the neceſſity of virtue in order to attain to happineſs in that ſtate; and it inculcates a ſyſtem of the pureſt morality, ſuch as has a direct tendency to diffuſe a univerſal ſpirit of benevolence, unity, and concord. This religion, while it aſcribes glory to God in the higheſt, breathes peace on earth, and good-will to men. In a word, it is a religion worthy of its divine author; it is not only a ſyſtem too refined and exalted for a few ignorant and illiterate men to frame or invent; but it is far ſuperior in dignity, in conſiſtency, and utility, to all that the genius, the learning, and the philanthropy, of a Socrates, a Plato, a Tully, a Seneca, or an Antoninus, could effect in their united and immortal labours, for the purpoſe of inſtructing and of reforming mankind.

ESSAY V.

On CHRISTIANITY.

PART II.

THAT objection which ſeems entitled to our firſt notice and attention, as being, if not the moſt formidable, perhaps the moſt acute and ingenious, which has ever been urged by the enemies of Chriſtianity, and alſo as being of ſuch a nature, as, if valid, to ſuperſede all other objections, is contained in Mr. Hume's celebrated Eſſay on Miracles. I ſhall ſtate it as fairly and conciſely as poſſible. "A miracle," ſays Mr Hume, "is a violation of the eſtabliſhed laws of nature. Now, the credit due to miracles reſts entirely upon teſtimony; but no teſtimony can be ſufficient in this caſe to produce a rational conviction; for however cogent the proof derived from this ſource may be repreſented, ſtill it muſt be acknowledged, that the falſehood of the ſtrongeſt teſtimony does not amount to a violation of the eſtabliſhed laws of nature, or, in other words, is not abſolutely miraculous:—therefore, if we believe a miracle upon the credit of the ſtrongeſt human teſtimony conceivable, we admit,

admit, of two improbable things, that which is moſt improbable; whereas reaſon requires us to reject the miracle, except the falſehood of the teſtimony ſhould be more miraculous than the event it is intended to eſtabliſh."

This is the objection in its full force; but however plauſible and ingenious it may be deemed, the fallacy of it immediately appears from this conſideration, that the evidence of teſtimony obviouſly admits of ſuch an accumulation of force, as to produce neceſſarily and mechanically a degree of conviction fully equal to the evidence of ſenſe; whatever is capable then of being proved by the ſenſes, is capable of being equally proved by teſtimony. No rational perſon can any more enterain a doubt of the exiſtence of ſuch a city as Paris, or ſuch a man as the King of France, than of his own exiſtence:—the evidence of teſtimony is here plainly equal to ocular demonſtration. But Mr. Hume will not deny, that a man may be rationally convinced of a miracle by ocular demonſtration; then why not on ſuch evidence as is equivalent to ocular demonſtration? To ſay, that the teſtimony upon which Chriſtianity is founded is of inferior force, is totally to deſert his argument, which poſitively denies the ſufficiency of that ſpecies of evidence, abſtractly conſidered, to prove any event of a miraculous nature. But were the miracles of Chriſt ſupported by the ſame kind and degree of evidence with that which compels us to believe the exiſtence of ſuch a country as France, or ſuch a city as Paris,

Paris, it would be impoſſible for Mr. Hume, notwithſtanding all his fine-ſpun reaſonings, to diſbelieve, or even to doubt, the reality of them; and, certainly, it cannot be irrational to believe, where it is impoſſible to diſbelieve. Nevertheleſs, as whatever truth is capable of being oppoſed by argument is capable of being defended by argument, this famous paradox of Mr. Hume, no doubt, demands a more ſtrict and logical confutation. The objection reſolves itſelf into two diſtinct propoſitions, one of which is true, and the other falſe. 1ſt, It is true, that a weaker evidence cannot deſtroy a ſtronger; in other words, it muſt be admitted, that of two inconſiſtent propoſitions that is to be adopted which is, upon the whole, beſt ſupported by proof, or moſt probable. But, 2dly, It is falſe, that a miracle is invariably to be regarded as the greateſt of all improbabilities.——"Uniform experience," as Mr. Hume well obſerves, "is the baſis of rational aſſurance;" and our uniform experience of human nature muſt convince us, that men are wholly actuated by motives. Now, if in order to obviate the teſtimony which is offered to authenticate an event of a miraculous nature, the reſurrection of Chriſt for inſtance, it is neceſſary to ſuppoſe, that the atteſtors were actuated by ſuch motives as are totally incompatible with thoſe immutable principles upon which human nature is founded, it would be abſurd in ſuch a caſe not to admit the reality of the miracle; as it would doubtleſs be much more

more incredible, that the fundamental principles of human nature ſhould ſuffer a total alteration, than that the Creator of the world ſhould condeſcend, in a way which we call miraculous, to make a a revelation of his will to mankind. In this ſuppoſition there is certainly nothing abſurd or improbable in itſelf. It is objected only, that ſuch an interpoſition is not agreeable to experience. Not to our experience, it muſt be acknowledged, but to aſſert that it is not agreeable to the experience of former ages, is evidently to beg the queſtion. It is poſitively affirmed, that ſuch interpoſition has actually taken place; but when, or by whom, was it ever pretended, that human nature was 2000 years ago conſtituted on principles diametrically oppoſite to thoſe by which it is actuated at preſent? In this caſe, therefore, we have the experience of all ages, to oppoſe to an experience not uniformly confirmed by the teſtimony of former ages. In a word, the hypotheſis which implies a want of uniformity in human nature involves in it a complication of confuſion and abſurdity, being wholly unſupported by evidence, and violating every principle of reaſon; but the ſuppoſition which admits a divine miraculous interpoſition is confirmed by a cloud of witneſſes, and it is likewiſe perfectly conſonant to thoſe ideas which reaſon teaches, or at leaſt favours, reſpecting the nature and attributes of the Deity, and agreeable to the general analogy of the divine government.

It

It would be improper to paſs unnoticed another ſophiſm of Mr. Hume, cloſely connected with the former, and worthy of the ſame author. He pretends, that of two oppoſite arguments, the ſuperior only gives us an aſſurance correſponding to that degree of force which remains after deducting the inferior. This is a maxim which ſeems calculated to introduce a ſyſtem of univerſal ſcepticiſm; for if it is juſt, we cannot attain to a full aſſurance of any one truth, but what admits of mathematical demonſtration. How happens it, then, that Mr. Hume ſhould, in contradiction to his own theory, reject all the proofs and evidences of Chriſtianity with ſuch poſitive diſdain? It cannot be denied that, taken collectively, they form a ſtrong body of evidence, amounting to what ſome have not ſcrupled to ſtile a moral demonſtration. But, replies Mr. Hume, I reject this evidence, becauſe it is inconſiſtent with other evidence which I regard as ſuperior in force. But, good Sir, will you pleaſe to deduct the force of the inferior from the force of the ſuperior evidence, and then tell us what the balance amounts to in favour of infidelity. Surely if this account was fairly ſtated, you would be conſtrained, if ingenuous, upon your own hypotheſis, to exclaim, with King Agrippa, "Almoſt I am perſuaded to be a Chriſtian." But, in order to relieve Mr. Hume from this aukward dilemma, it may be obſerved, that moral evidence admits of a great variety of degrees, ſuch as is generally diſtinguiſhed by the terms demonſtrative, concluſive, ſatisfac-

tory, &c. Now a propoſition eſtabliſhed by demonſtrative, concluſive, or ſatisfactory evidence, muſt neceſſarily be regarded as true; and it ſo happens that truth admits of no degrees, and whatever may become of the calculations of the Philoſopher, the axiom of the Poet ſtands uncontradicted, that "Truth is Truth to the end of the reckoning." Therefore, if the evidence is ſuch as is ſufficient to produce a clear conviction of the truth of the propoſition in queſtion, it is impoſſible to have recourſe to that metaphyſical deduction recommended by Mr. Hume, for truth admits of no deduction or diminution whatever.

Thus, if I am perſuaded by any evidence, whether it be, or not be, ſtrictly demonſtrative that Chriſtianity is true; if I am aſſailed by ten thouſand objections, my faith is not ſhaken by the mere conſideration of an oppoſition of arguments, nor am I in the leaſt inclined to ſacrifice the ſmalleſt particle of the truth in ſuch circumſtances, under the ſpecious pretext of philoſophical impartiality, and of allowing due weight to the arguments on both ſides; for the mind reſts with exactly the ſame ſecurity upon moral certainty, and even upon evidence many degrees ſhort of moral certainty, as upon mathematical demonſtration. And I maintain, that with reſpect to Chriſtianity, as in a thouſand other caſes, the evidence is ſo ſtriking, and forcible, as to be capable of producing, and it has actually produced in thouſands, a firm and rational conviction of its truth.

truth. In this ſtate of mind objections muſt of courſe ceaſe to influence; and however plauſible they might be deemed while there was room for doubt, let impartial reaſon once pronounce the evidence ſufficient, they inſtantly vaniſh and diſſolve; and we believe the aſtoniſhing accounts of the fall of the Perſian or Peruvian Empires with as little heſitation as we admit that two and two are equal to four, or that the whole is greater than the part.

But, 2dly, It has been triumphantly aſked concerning chriſtianity, by ſome of its adverſaries, *Cui bono?* They boldy aſſert, that nothing of importance is contained in revelation which was not diſcoverable by the light of reaſon; they profeſs to admit the great doctrines of the unity and perfections of God; of the eſſential and unalterable diſtinction between moral good and evil; of the immateriality and immortality of the ſoul; and of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments: all theſe things they admit; admit! but upon what ground? I would not willingly depreciate human reaſon and underſtanding, but I profeſs it appears to me very doubtful, whether, upon natural principles, any one of theſe articles will admit of ſatisfactory proof. The beſt ſolution of that difficult queſtion, What religious truths are diſcoverable by the light of reaſon, is afforded by recurring to facts; and it will indiſputably appear, that even in thoſe ages and countries which are moſt celebrated for intellectual

improvements of every kind, very little advance was made in religious knowledge: it is true, a few of the heathen philoſophers and moraliſts attained to a comparatively juſt view of the ſubject, but mixed with much error, darkneſs, and uncertainty;—but now each prating fool becomes a Socrates; and though Plato, Tully, and Seneca were ſcarcely able to attain a glimpſe of divine truths, it was owing it ſeems not to the obſcurity in which thoſe truths were involved, but to their own ſtupidity and dullneſs of apprehenſion; for in theſe times, a pert templar, a magazine critic, or even a Grub-ſtreet garatteer, thoſe oracles of reaſon, can develope theſe ſuppoſed myſteries with perfect eaſe. To be ſerious, as it cannot be expected that I ſhould in the compaſs of a ſhort Eſſay, enter fully into the diſcuſſion of an objection of this general and extenſive nature, a ſhort and general anſwer muſt ſuffice. I ſay then, I deny the fact on which the objection is founded. I ſay, that human reaſon is not capable of affording full and ſatisfactory evidence of the great truths of religion. I ſay, that the greateſt geniuſes, and moſt celebrated philoſophers of antiquity, were never able to attain to any thing like a firm conviction of the truth of theſe fundamental doctrines; and I ſay, that it is in the higheſt degree improbable, that the world would ever have been influenced in any conſiderable degree by any attempts to inculcate theſe truths upon natural principles; becauſe the evidence on which they

they reſted was in itſelf ſo abſtruſe, as to be far above the comprehenſion of vulgar capacities; and at the ſame time ſo ambiguous, that the few who were capable of comprehending it, could never attain to a thorough perſuaſion of the truth and certainty of the principles which it was the object of that evidence to eſtabiſh. But, 3dly, There are ſome who are perfectly ſenſible of the value and importance of the diſcoveries made by revelation, and who would willingly embrace Chriſtianity, were they not deterred by an idea, that it alſo contains certain abſurd and irrational tenets, ſuch as are inconſiſtent with common ſenſe and natural propriety; and, therefore, cannot poſſibly be ſuppoſed to proceed from a Being of perfect wiſdom and knowledge—ſuch as the doctrines of the Trinity and the atonement, of predeſtination, of original ſin, &c. not to mention the ſtrange and fabulous accounts recorded in thoſe books which compoſe the Jewiſh Canon; ſuch as the Moſaic account of creation; of the fall of man; of the general deluge, and the whole hiſtory of the Jewiſh nation. In anſwer to this, I ſhall beg leave to obſerve, that it is extremely raſh and inexcuſable to reject the plain and poſitive proofs of Chriſtianity, on account of the abſurdities which that religion may be ſuppoſed to inculcate, previous to a ſerious and impartial examination whether thoſe abſurdities are really included in it or not. For my own part, I have read the New Teſtament with ſome degree of attention, and I

never yet could diſcover in it the doctrine of the Trinity, or any thing reſembling ſuch a doctrine; nor has the word ſo much as once occurred to me in all my examinations and reſearches. As to the doctrine of the atonement, I do not deny it to be the uniform doctrine of ſcripture, that *the blood of Chriſt cleanſeth from all ſin.* The death of Chriſt was, undoubtedly, an eſſential part of the divine plan of redemption; and who will ſtand up and venture to affirm, that a better or more eligible plan might have been adopted? Shall folly teach wiſdom how to act? Shall guilty man preſume to preſcribe to infinite power and goodneſs the terms of his own pardon and acceptance?

Some perſons, however, it muſt be acknowledged, have ſtrangely diſfigured and miſrepreſented this divine truth, by their weak and confident aſſertions that the death of Chriſt was truly and literally a compenſation and equivalent for the ſins of mankind. As the guilt of ſin, ſay theſe profound logicians and theologiſts, is infinite, by being committed againſt an infinite Being, it was impoſſible that this guilt could be expiated but by the ſufferings and death of Chriſt, whoſe equal participation in the divine nature gave an infinite efficacy to that ſacrifice which he offered on the croſs for the ſins of the elect. Such tenets as theſe it would be a hard taſk indeed to reconcile to common ſenſe; but, happily, it would be juſt as difficult to reconcile them to the ſenſe of ſcripture; for there

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we read, that "GOD ſo loved the world, that "he ſent his only begotten Son to die for our "ſakes." This we are given to underſtand was the mode in which infinite goodneſs was determined by infinite wiſdom to exert itſelf in our behalf. The doctrine of original ſin, ſo far as it is a ſcriptural doctrine, is perfectly agreeable to reaſon and experience; and it no more belongs to revealed than to natural religion to account for thoſe evil propenſities inherent in our nature, and which too frequently betray the beſt and wiſeſt of the human race into actual violations of the divine law. But it has happened, I think, that the moſt vociferous exclamations have been raiſed againſt that doctrine, which, of all others, is leaſt liable to exception, the doctrine of Election or Predeſtination: I ſay not that this ſublime article of the Chriſtian faith has not been debaſed, by the the Calviniſtic repreſentation of it; but it is an unqueſtionable truth, that happineſs and miſery are diſpenſed to every intelligent being, in ſuch proportions as GOD in his ſovereign wiſdom thinks fit. "He will have mercy on whom he will have "mercy." Nevertheleſs, we may reſt ſecure on this aſſurance, "that without holineſs no man ſhall ſee "the LORD;" and according to the different degrees of improvement to which we may attain in moral excellence ſhall we participate of the divine favour; and it would be as abſurd and extravagant to neglect the means of moral and religious improvement, becauſe there is an eternal purpoſe reſpecting us

ſubſiſting in the Divine mind, as it would be to neglect our temporal intereſts, and all the common concerns of life, becauſe the events which ſhall befall us in the preſent world are likewiſe foreknown and fore-ordained. With reſpect to the difficulties attending the Moſaic and Jewiſh hiſtories, this general conſideration may perhaps be of ſome uſe: That if the truth of Chriſtianity is ſufficently eſtabliſhed, an independant proof of the credibility of theſe ancient writings, though I believe they admit of it, is not to be peremptorily demanded. Chriſtianity undoubtedly ſuppoſes that the Jewiſh nation was diſtinguiſhed from all others by a ſeries of ſupernatural interpoſitions; but whether that ſeries is related with accuracy by the Jewiſh hiſtorians; whether any ſpurious additions have in a long courſe of ages been made to theſe writings; whether the Jewiſh traditions related by Moſes reſpecting the creation of the world, the fall of Adam, or the general deluge, &c. may be implicitly depended upon; whether Sampſon really killed a thouſand men with the jawbone of an aſs; or whether Balaam's aſs did or did not addreſs his maſter in a rational and articulate ſpeech; all theſe things, I ſay, are matters of comparatively trifling import, and every one is at liberty to form the beſt hypotheſis he can for his own ſatisfaction; but it muſt ſurely be a very extraordinary and preposterous ſpecies of incredulity which ſhould reject the clear and poſitive evidence of Chriſt's reſurrection, becauſe the hiſtory of Balaam and his

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aſs may perhaps reſt upon ſlender and dubious authority. 4thly, It is objected, " that probable evidence only is or can be offered by the advocates of Chriſtianity in its behalf. Now it might, ſay theſe objectors, be reaſonably preſumed, that a divine revelation would be attended with demonſtrative and irreſiſtible evidence of its divine authority; ſuch as ſhould flaſh conviction on the moſt obſtinate and obdurate hearts; nor has this religion been in fact productive of thoſe beneficial effects which might be expected from a genuine revelation of the Divine will." That Chriſtianity might have been accompanied by ſuch irreſiſtible evidence as would have compelled conviction, cannot be doubted; but that ſuch an high degree of evidence was reaſonably to be expected, I utterly deny; according to the obvious analogy of nature, nothing more than probability could be hoped for, or perhaps rationally deſired. Man is ſo formed as to act on probabilities in all caſes which concern his preſent or future happineſs: to aſcertain the comparative importance of theſe probabilities, and to frame our conduct agreably to the views we entertain of that importance, is the perfection of human wiſdom. He who waits for demonſtration where probability only is attainable, is chargeable with the abſurdity attributed to the countryman waiting on the river's banks: He remains for ever inactive, in expectation of that which will never be; the tide of time ſhall roll on, but never ſhall any one in this ſtate of trial and probation be indulged on any ſubject relative

relative to man's duty or happineſs, with evidence of ſuch kind or degree as ſhall preclude him from the full exerciſe of his rational and intellectual powers; and by an impartial and diligent exertion of theſe powers, the evidence attending Chriſtianity will quickly appear to be ſufficiently probable to ſatisfy the underſtanding and to influence the conduct; and though we ſhould be ultimately miſtaken, we may in this caſe, if in any, adopt the expreſſion of the Poet, and ſay, in our vindication,

"It had been vicious to have miſtruſted."

As to the plea that Chriſtianity has not been productive of thoſe ſignal benefits which might have been expected from a divine revelation, it is enough to reply, that expectation is vague and indefinite. The fact is, that the Chriſtian religion, greatly as it has been corrupted, has produced a mighty reformation of morals in the world. We ſee plainly that it is in a ſtate of progreſſion, and in proportion as it is better underſtood, and more generally diffuſed, its effects will be more happy and beneficial. In this enlightened age and country a Chriſtian of very moderate attainments in virtue would be ſhocked at the recital of the enormous vices which were almoſt univerſally prevalent in the ages of antiquity. The heathens, as is well known, attributed the groſſeſt crimes and immoralities even to their deities; how then could it be expected that they themſelves ſhould abſtain from the practice of them. Our Saviour compares the Goſpel to a ſmall ſeed, which being caſt into the earth, at length becomes

becomes a tall and ſpreading tree, ſo that birds ſeek for ſhelter in the branches of it; this prophetical deſcription will no doubt in due time be realized: "The leaves of the tree are deſtined for the healing of the nations:" In the mean time we have no right to complain of the ſlow and gradual progreſs of this grand ſcheme of reformation, nor have we any more reaſon to expect a clear ſolution of this difficulty, Why does not Chriſtianity afford an immediate and complete remedy for moral evil? than of the ſtill greater difficulty, Why was evil itſelf introduced into the univerſe?

5thly, It is ſaid, "that if the miracles of Chriſt were real miracles, it is not poſſible that any degree of incredulity or prejudice could have reſiſted the force of them, but an immediate converſion of the Jewiſh nation, and in a ſhort time of the whole Gentile world, muſt have been the inevitable conſequence of ſuch an aſtoniſhing exertion of divine power." But I cannot help thinking that this objection argues either great ignorance of human nature, or of the actual ſtate of things at the time of Chriſt's appearance. It is not eaſy for us to form an idea of the prodigious ſhock which the principles of the Chriſtian religion gave to all the preconceived opinions and prejudices of the Jews. That the Meſſiah, their long expected prince and Saviour, ſhould at laſt appear in circumſtances ſo mean, obſcure, and indigent; that the great Deliverer, ſo magnificently deſcribed by the prophets of old, ſhould be

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no other than Jeſus of Nazareth, the carpenters ſon; that the kingdom he came to eſtabliſh ſhould be not of this world, but of a wholly ſpiritual nature; that the benefits and privileges of it, ſhould not be confined to GOD's peculiar people, but extended to the Gentile nations; that a few illiterate fiſhermen ſhould be ſelected as the friends and followers of the Meſſiah, and employed as the great inſtruments of diffuſing his religion, to the excluſion of the learned, the noble, and the mighty of the land; that after being expoſed to every ſpecies of indignity and perſecution in the ſhort courſe of his life, he ſhould ſuffer a painful and ignominious death upon the croſs; theſe were things utterly irreconcileable with the opinions which were moſt deeply rooted in their minds. They were a rock of offence, which even the evidence of miracles themſelves was unable to remove. "He pretended to ſave others, but himſelf he cannot ſave;" this was in their apprehenſion an argument of the moſt clear and convincing nature. They rather choſe to aſcribe thoſe ſupernatural works, the reality of which they could not deny, to the agency of Beelzebub, than to that of the Spirit of God; and let any one duly reflect upon the aſtoniſhing and invincible force of human prejudices, and he will, I think, be convinced, that at this very day miracles, ſimilar to thoſe of Chriſt, would be found equally inſufficient to break the ſhackles of Mahometan deluſion and Popiſh ſuperſtition. I make not the leaſt queſtion, but that a man who ſhould openly maintain

maintain at Conſtantinople that Mahomet was a blaſphemous impoſtor, would be impaled; or at Madrid, that tranſubſtantiation was an impious abſurdity, would be brought to the ſtake, though they were able to eſtabliſh their aſſertions even by an appeal to miracles; whatever amazement might be excited, ſuch a man would certainly upon the whole be regarded by the bulk of the people as a falſe prophet. It appears that for a time the miracles pretended to be wrought at the tomb of the Abbé Paris gained conſiderable credit in ſo enlightened a country as France, but I never heard of a ſingle Moliniſt who was converted to Janſeniſm in conſequence of them. What I have ſaid reſpecting the Jews may eaſily be ſeen to apply with ſtill greater force to the Gentiles, whoſe prejudices, though totally different, were doubtleſs equally ſtrong; and if the Jews were not to be convinced though one roſe from the dead, it cannot be ſuppoſed that the Gentiles would be more inclined to liſten to evidence which came to them with diminiſhed force; and as it is well known that the Jews were regarded with contempt by the Greeks and Romans as a credulous and bigotted nation, it may reaſonably be preſumed, that the firſt account of a new religion, ſupported by miracles, which obtained ſo little credit in Judea itſelf, would be treated with the higheſt diſdain and deriſion by the learned heathens, and would be rejected without heſitation or examination.

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6thly, There is one objection more, and it is the only one I can recollect, which ſeems to have any conſiderable claim to notice. "How can that revelation, it is ſaid, be of divine authority, which is not perfectly conſiſtent with itſelf? Now it is eaſy to point out a variety of inconſiſtencies, both with reſpect to facts and reaſonings, in thoſe books which compoſe the canon of ſcripture, and in which only the Chriſtian religion is contained?" This objection is founded upon a very erroneous notion, which has been and ſtill is too much countenanced by the profeſſors of Chriſtianity themſelves, who in general maintain that the ſacred writings were compoſed under the immediate influence of divine inſpiration; a notion highly improbable in itſelf, plainly contrary to the general tenor of ſcripture, and wholly deſtitute of proof, excepting ſuch as may be derived from a groſs perverſion of a few detached paſſages. The Apoſtles and Evangeliſts never pretended, like the great impoſtor Mahomet, that their writings were dictated by the Angel Gabriel, or ever urged the perfection of their own compoſitions, as a deciſive proof of the authenticity of the Chriſtian religion. They were indeed witneſſes faithful and true, men of ſtrict integrity, who had the beſt opportunity of being informed of the leading facts which they aſſerted, and who were under no conceivable temptation to wiſh to impoſe a vile and incredible falſehood upon the world, and men who were of all others leaſt likely to ſucceed in ſo abſurd

abſurd an attempt; but the teſtimony they gave to the truth of Chriſtianity was to all intents a human teſtimony, eſtabliſhed indeed by miracles and prophecies, but by no means exempt from thoſe venial errors which accompany every thing human. Were I even convinced, that in a decree promulgated by the joint authority of the twelve Apoſtles, convened in general council, there were contained any article which demonſtrated that they were not entirely emancipated from Jewiſh weakneſs and prejudice; were it clearly proved, that the reaſonings of St. Paul, or St. Peter, were ſometimes inclu-
ſive, or that the facts reported by St. Luke, or St. Matthew, were in ſome points inaccurately ſtated, I ſhould ſtill believe, with exactly the ſame degree of confidence, that Chriſt was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his reſurrection from the dead, and that he will come again to judge the world in righteouſneſs: "But if an entire and implicit dependance is not to be placed on every part of holy writ, where ſhall we draw the line? If a habit of ſcepticiſm is indulged, where ſhall we ſtop?" Such is the language of weakneſs and timidity. But it may be aſked, what neceſſity is there for drawing a preciſe line or boundary in this caſe, or what pretence is there for requiring a degree of preciſion on this ſubject, which moral ſubjects in general and the very nature of moral evidence do not admit?—Let every man uſe that portion of reaſon and underſtanding which GOD hath given him, for the purpoſe of inveſtigating

inveſtigating the evidence and the principles of Chriſtianity, and let him determine for himſelf, after a cool and impartial deliberation, what this religion teaches, and upon what authority it ſtands. Let not the apprehenſion or reproach of ſcepticiſm alarm or deter him from the moſt perfect freedom of enquiry; for that inveſtigation which does not originate in doubt, can never terminate in rational conviction.

ESSAY VI.

On HEREDITARY SUCCESSION.

AT the firſt view, it muſt be acknowledged that the idea of *hereditary ſucceſſion* appears ſo whimſical, and even abſurd, that one is tempted to wonder how it could have obtained ſo decided a preference in almoſt all civilized countries. In an affair ſo important to the general intereſts of mankind, as the choice of thoſe perſons who are deſtined to hold the higheſt rank in civil communities, and are inveſted with ſuch powers as the ſtrongeſt political neceſſity only could induce an enlightened people to intruſt to any individuals, is it not contrary to every principle of reaſon and common ſenſe, to lay a greater ſtreſs upon the ſingle and accidental circumſtance of birth, than upon thoſe moral and intellectual qualities which have an immediate tendency to ſecure the great ends of government, the peace, happineſs, and proſperity of the community? ſuch as genius, wiſdom, knowledge, beneficence, or valour—qualities which muſt ever excite the higheſt degree of eſteem and admiration. It would, however, be eaſy to ſhew, and it has in fact been repeatedly demonſtrated, that hereditary ſucceſſion is attended

by advantages which infinitely overbalance the inconveniencies to which it is liable; and that a power of electing the ſupreme magiſtrate, in whatever hands it might be lodged, muſt in all probability be productive of ſuch a degree of political animoſity, diſorder, and confuſion, that the poſſeſſion of ſuch a privilege would be a great and real misfortune. In this country, at leaſt, this truth is ſo generally acknowledged, that it would be very ſuperfluous to enter into a formal diſcuſſion of it. Perhaps, amongſt all the political zealots with which this kingdom abounds in theſe days of innovation and reformation, there is not one who would wiſh to extend our liberties by converting this ancient hereditary monarchy into an elective one. But there is another queſtion relative to this ſubject, of much leſs conſequence indeed, which may not, perhaps, be ſo eaſily ſolved, or the ſolution of which, at leaſt, may not afford ſuch univerſal ſatisfaction. It is this: Whether the order of ſucceſſion eſtabliſhed in this monarchy, is that which is in itſelf moſt eligible; or, in other words, that which is moſt likely to preſerve the public peace and tranquillity? I do not heſitate to confeſs, that in my opinion it is not; and this opinion I ſhall endeavour to ſupport, by ſuch conſiderations as have occurred to me when I have chanced to turn my thoughts to this ſubject.

It is well known how ſtrongly the French nation is attached to their famous Salique law, which is

is univerſally regarded as a fundamental law of the monarchy: and, though it has been the accidental occaſion of the greateſt misfortunes which that kingdom has ever experienced, it appears founded on the beſt and ſoundeſt principles of legiſlative policy. The prepoſterous pretenſions of Edward III. to the crown of France, evidently laid the foundation of that rancourous animoſity which has ſo long ſubſiſted, and which ſtill ſubſiſts, between the two countries of England and France, and which has been the ſource of infinite miſery to both. I do not ſcruple to ſtile them prepoſterous, becauſe, whether the validity of the Salique law was or was not admitted, they were equally oppoſite to the moſt obvious dictates of juſtice and equity. There was indeed no colourable pretext to object to the validity of a law which had all the force human ſanctions can give; but, on the ſuppoſition that the objections urged by Edward were well founded, it is plain that the right of ſucceſſion devolved on Charles, King of Navarre, who was deſcended from a daughter of Lewis Hutin, whereas Edward was ſon of Iſabella, ſiſter to that monarch. It has been obſerved, and I think not very ſuperſtitiouſly, that great national crimes have commonly been followed by great national puniſhments, and ſometimes by ſuch as have borne a ſignal analogy to the nature of the offence; and it may be remarked, that the bloody wars occaſioned by the claims ſo unwarrantably advanced by Edward III. to the crown of France,

and which, contrary to every principle of policy as well as juſtice, was for a ſeries of years countenanced and ſupported by the parliament and people of England, had ſcarcely ſubſided, when the flames of civil diſcord were kindled in this country, and ſpread with wonderful rapidity, in conſequence of the abſurd prejudices generally entertained with reſpect to this very point, I mean the right of ſucceſſion; which prejudices originated in, or at leaſt were ſtrongly confirmed by, the great ſtreſs which the nation had been accuſtomed to place on pretenſions tranſmitted through a ſimilar medium; and theſe flames were not finally extinguiſhed till the laſt male deſcendant of the numerous family of Edward III. had fallen a victim to the conteſt, and the whole houſe, and the very name of Plantagenet, was for ever annihilated. In order to illuſtrate theſe obſervations, it muſt be remembered, that the heroic Prince of Wales, ſo well known in hiſtory by the appellation of Edward the Black Prince, unfortunately for the nation, died ſome years previous to his father, and left an only ſon, afterward Richard II. who inherited neither the virtues nor talents of his famous progenitors. By a ſeries of odious and arbitrary acts he excited the indignation and reſentment of the nation to ſuch a degree, that when Henry Duke of Lancaſter, afterwards King Henry IV. returned from exile to claim his paternal inheritance, which had been wreſted from him by regal violence, Richard found himſelf ſuddenly deſerted by

by all deſcriptions of perſons, who crowded, as it were in emulation of each other, to the ſtandard of his adverſary. In conſequence of which, he was ſoon reduced to the fatal neceſſity of conſenting to his own depoſition, and in a full and free parliament the crown was unanimouſly conferred upon the Duke of Lancaſter, as a reward due to his patriotiſm and valour; and it was quietly tranſmitted to his ſon, the victorious Henry V.; at whoſe death it was placed, without oppoſition, upon the head of his infant heir, Henry VI. who peaceably enjoyed it for more than thirty years. Might it not then reaſonably be imagined, that an uninterrupted poſſeſſion of half a century would have ſufficed to have given firmneſs and ſtability to a title originally founded on parliamentary authority, and confirmed by the univerſal and joyful acquieſcence of the nation? on the contrary, however, the title of the reigning family was in fact ſuppoſed to be ſo palpably defective, that a growing diſſatisfaction ſeems to have pervaded the minds of all ranks of perſons; and when Richard Duke of York openly avowed his reſolution "to pluck the crown from feeble Henry's head," he found the nation very generally diſpoſed to favour and ſupport his pretenſions; and, during the long civil conteſts which ſucceeded, the affections of the nation appeared invariably attached to the Houſe of York, which gained, and in the perſon of Edward IV. maintained, firm poſſeſſion of the crown for many years, and nothing leſs than the com-

plicated guilt of Richard III. could have paved the way for the reſtoration of the Houſe of Lancaſter; and it is even probable that Henry VII. though a prince of great abilities, could not long have retained poſſeſſion, had he not ſo far condeſcended to the prejudices of the nation as to unite the two families by a marriage with Elizabeth, eldeſt daughter of Edward IV. and, according to the maxims of ſucceſſion adopted by the nation in general, undoubted heireſs of the Houſe of York. Theſe maxims, or prejudices, as I think they ought rather to be ſtiled, ſeem, I ſay, to have originated in the abſurd predilection which the Engliſh nation entertained in favour of the title of the Kings of England to the Crown of France; and there was, indeed, a manifeſt inconſiſtency in claiming the Crown of France by virtue of a deſcent from the female line, whilſt the Crown of England was held by the Princes of the Houſe of Lancaſter, to the excluſion of the female line, for parliamentary authority was in thoſe ages thought by much too ſlight a foundation for a claim of ſuch magnitude to reſt upon, not to mention that the Houſe of Valois could equally plead the authority of the General Aſſembly of Eſtates in France. There had been no example of a female reign in England ſince the diſſolution of the heptarchy; and though Henry II. ſucceeded in right of his mother, the Empreſs Maud, it muſt be remembered that the male branches of the Norman line were totally extinct: the attachment of the Engliſh nation therefore

therefore to this order of ſucceſſion, cannot, I think, be traced to any other ſource. The Houſe of Lancaſter indeed enjoyed an important advantage over the rival family, as being the undoubted elder male branch exiſting of the Royal Houſe of Plantagenet, being deſcended from John of Gaunt, third ſon of the common progenitor Edward III. The Houſe of York founded their claims on a deſcent from Lionel Duke of Clarence, ſecond ſon of that monarch, whoſe only daughter, Philippa, intermarried with Edmund Mortimer Earl of March, and by the union of the heireſs of the Houſe of March with the heir of Edmund, fourth ſon of Edward III. created Duke of York, the right of ſucceſſion, which was ſuppoſed to inhere in the deſcendants of the Duke of Clarence, was tranſmitted to the Houſe of York, the youngeſt male branch of the Houſe of Plantagenet. The title of the Houſe of March had, in the reign of Richard, been expreſsly recognized in parliament; and it is rather extraordinary that Henry IV. never attempted to invalidate this popular claim, by procuring any formal act of repeal or renunciation; but that jealous and politic prince well knew how dangerous it might prove by ſuch means to draw the attention of the public to a claim which, according to the ideas almoſt univerſally prevalent at that time, was founded on the moſt obvious and unalterable principles of juſtice. He adopted therefore another mode of proceeding, perfectly conſonant to that profound ſagacity which diſtin-

guiſhed every part of his political conduct. He procured a parliamentary ſettlement of the Crown on himſelf and his heirs male, which amounted to a virtual adoption of the Salique law, in a mode leaſt obnoxious to the public cenſure, and which bade faireſt eventually to extinguiſh the claims of the rival family; but this very artful, or to give it a more ſuitable appellation, this very wiſe meaſure, did not prove ſucceſsful, for the Parliament which had enacted this important law, ſoon found the neceſſity of accommodating their own ideas, if indeed their ideas ever really coincided with thoſe of the King, to the unconquerable force of popular prejudice, and of repealing an act which was highly beneficial to the public in its tendency, and which laid the beſt foundation for a permament and durable ſettlement.

In the ſucceeding reign, the ridiculous pretenſions of Edward III. which were abſolutely relinquiſhed at the Peace of Bretigny, were unfortunately revived by Henry V. who, in conſequence of a remarkable concurrence of favourable circumſtances, united to his own great talents, had nearly effected the final conqueſt of the French monarchy; but his death unexpectedly taking place in the midſt of his triumphs, the fortune of the war was fatally reverſed, and the Engliſh were at length diſpoſſeſſed of all their tranſmarine territories, Calais alone excepted. Soon after the termination of this ſecond violent and iniquitous attempt to deprive the Houſe of Valois of its juſt rights, that

that fierce and implacable conteſt between the two rival houſes commenced, which did not ceaſe till the Earl of Warwick, laſt of the name of Plantagenet, had fallen a victim to the jealous and cruel policy of Henry VII. and till, by a final union of claims in the perſon of Henry VIII. there no longer ſubſiſted any ground of competition. Since the acceſſion of that monarch three centuries have nearly elapſed, and throughout that long period it muſt be acknowledged that no ſenſible inconvenience has ariſen from adhering to the eſtabliſhed order of ſucceſſion, but this certainly is not to be aſcribed to any extraordinary degree of political wiſdom or foreſight, but to a certain happy influence, whether natural or providential, which ſeems, with few intervals or exceptions, from that time to have diffuſed itſelf over almoſt all the public and national concerns of this country; and a very ſlight ſurvey of modern Engliſh hiſtory will ſuffice to prove the truth of this aſſertion. Previous to the divorce of Henry VIII. from Catharine of Arragon, the Princeſs Mary, afterwards Queen, was the undiſputed preſumptive heireſs of the Engliſh Crown, in conſequence of which the diſpoſal of her in marriage became a matter of the utmoſt importance to the nation. Overtures on this ſubject were at different times made, both by France and Spain, which were happily rejected, and though, on her acceſſion to the throne, the liberties of the kingdom were expoſed to the moſt imminent danger by the matrimonial

trimonial connection ſhe then formed with Philip II. as ſhe fortunately died in a few years without iſſue, the evils which threatened the nation were for this time averted. The reign of Elizabeth was diſtinguiſhed by an almoſt uninterrupted ſolicitude in the parliament and people, with regard to this ſubject; a ſolicitude which diſplayed itſelf in applications to the Queen, continually repeated, to form ſuch a matrimonial union as would moſt effectually ſecure the public happineſs; and though the Queen firmly and magnanimouſly reſiſted theſe ſolicitations, with a view no doubt, in the firſt place, to maintain her own authority and independency entire, and in the next, eventually to effect an union of the two Britiſh Crowns, which was apparently a favourite if not a primary object with that great Princeſs, yet in ſome critical moments of her life, reaſons of ſtate ſeemed to influence her conduct leſs than motives of a very different nature; and it is certain that the Duke of Anjou's accompliſhments made ſo deep an impreſſion on the Queen's heart, that ſhe reſiſted with difficulty the importunity with which he urged his ſuit. The violence of the Duke's ſubſequent conduct plainly evinces the riſque which muſt have been incurred had he met with ſucceſs, of which indeed the nation at the time was fully ſenſible. To paſs over ſome of the ſucceeding reigns, it is obvious to remark, that if the King and Parliament had not interfered as to the diſpoſal of the two daughters of the Duke

of

of York, afterwards King James II. the moſt fatal conſequences might have enſued. Even poſterior to the Act of Settlement, it is worthy of obſervation, that had our late venerable monarch died before marriage, the Crown of England would have devolved upon Sophia Dorothea, Queen of Pruſſia, mother of the illuſtrious Frederic, and how the Engliſh nation would have reliſhed ſuch a plan of government as thoſe great political reformers the Pruſſian Huſſars might have eſtabliſhed amongſt us by this time, it is ſcarcely worth while to examine. What I mean upon the whole to infer from this ſlight review of facts is this, that it is a moſt dangerous error in politics for a country, which like England boaſts of a conſtitution founded upon the baſis of liberty, in any circumſtances to admit the right of females to ſucceed to the Crown. It is a matter of ſmall moment indeed to the inhabitants of France or Spain, whether the ſceptre remains in the hands of a Prince of the Houſe of Bourbon, or whether it is ſuffered to paſs into another and a foreign family; as political happineſs amongſt them depends almoſt entirely upon the perſonal diſpoſition and genius of the Monarch, they ſeem to ſtand a nearly equal chance of attaining it, whatever family may happen to acquire poſſeſſion of the throne; but in this kingdom, whoſe maxims of policy differ ſo widely from all others, it is of the utmoſt importance that the Houſe of Brunſwick ſhould

continue

continue to ſway the Britiſh ſceptre. The title of the Princes of that Houſe to the Crown, reſts entirely upon parliamentary authority. They owe a debt of gratitude to the nation at large, which can never be obliterated. The ancient royal Houſe of Stuart was depoſed and baniſhed, and a very conſiderable number of Princes, who ſtood prior in the order of ſucceſſion, were excluded, in order to clear the path to the throne for them. They have not ſcrupled frequently to expreſs the ſenſe they entertain of theſe obligations in their public declarations, and to acknowledge that it is incumbent upon them in return, to maintain the free and happy conſtitution of this government ſacred and inviolate; and it muſt be allowed, that though in the courſe of an adminiſtration of near eighty years, their conduct in ſome inſtances has juſtly been thought liable to exception, yet upon the whole, and to ſpeak in general terms, they have acted in a manner worthy of their profeſſions, and of the diſtinguiſhed ſtations they have filled, as placed at the head of the moſt powerful community of free citizens which, ſince the fall of the Roman Republic, the world has ever known. It would be a dangerous experiment, and ſuch as I believe the heart of every Engliſhman would revolt againſt, to permit the Crown to be transferred to another family, deeply tinctured perhaps with foreign prejudices and arbitrary principles, whilſt there may be numerous branches

ſubſiſting

ſubſiſting of the preſent illuſtrious race of Princes, who born and educated in this country would glory in the name of Briton. It may be aſked, What probability is there that ſuch an event ſhould ever take place? I anſwer, the probability is not ſo diſtant or ideal as may be generally imagined, conſidering the great increaſe of the Royal Family ſince the acceſſion of his preſent Majeſty; for were the marriage of the Prince of Wales to take place, and were daughters only to ariſe from ſuch marriage, according to the preſent law of ſucceſſion the eldeſt daughter of his Royal Highneſs, in whatever part of the world ſhe might be ſettled, or to what Prince or private ſubject ſoever ſhe might be united, without an expreſs act of excluſion, would become Queen of England. It is eaſy to imagine a variety of ſimilar caſes, by which the imperial Crown of theſe realms might be tranſmitted from family to family, as private eſtates are ſeen to do every day under the operation of the ſame general law of inheritance. In order to eſtabliſh an effectual remedy for this great political defect in our conſtitution, I would humbly propoſe a revival of the wiſe and ſalutary Act of Henry IV. a new Act of Settlement, limiting the ſucceſſion of the Crowns of Great Britain and Ireland to the heirs male of his Majeſty now reigning; and this muſt be allowed to be a juncture peculiarly favourable to ſuch limitation, as it is not in any degree probable that the Princeſſes of the

the Royal Houſe now living can receive any injury from it; and he muſt be a very ſcrupulous politician indeed who ſhould found an objection againſt a meaſure ſo beneficial, upon the loſs which may be eventually ſuſtained in conſequence of it by perſons yet unborn. Indeed, my recollection does not ſuggeſt to me any objections which have even a colour of plauſibility; but as weak arguments are entitled to ſome degree of regard, when more forcible ones are not to be found, it may perhaps be worth while to beſtow a moment's attention upon theſe that follow, which are the beſt I am able to frame in this caſe.

1ſt, It may be ſaid, that as the monarchy has ſubſiſted ſo long, and flouriſhed ſo greatly under the preſent form, it would be raſh and unadviſable to make important innovations upon ſpeculative conſiderations; at leaſt, as there is no immediate proſpect of danger, there can be no immediate neceſſity for alteration. In anſwer to this vague and general objection I do not heſitate to acknowledge, that the monarchy has long ſubſiſted and flouriſhed, notwithſtanding that great defect in its conſtitution which I have pointed out; but what then? Are we entitled to infer from this acknowledgment that the defect in queſtion has been productive of no inconvenience to the State? far from it. We know that the long and bloody conteſts between the two great rival Houſes of

of York and Lancaſter originated from this ſource. We know that ſince the termination of thoſe fatal diviſions, we have at various times, and in divers inſtances, been expoſed to the moſt imminent danger by an abſurd attachment to the ſame antiquated and impolitic maxim. We know that by an obſtinate adherence to it, the Crown may, in the ſpace of a very few years, be transferred from the preſent Royal Family into the poſſeſſion of a Prince who may be an utter ſtranger to our laws, language and conſtitution, in which caſe the native Princes of the Houſe of Brunſwick would no doubt become the objects of his perpetual jealouſy, hatred and perſecution; and theſe ſurely are ſufficient grounds for adopting a regulation, which appears equally favourable to the grandeur of the monarch, and the felicity of the people. "But "there is no immediate danger, therefore no im- "mediate neceſſity." What! are we to wait till the danger becomes imminent, and perhaps irreſiſtible, before we attempt to apply the remedy? Does the phyſician delay the application of the medicine till the very moment that he expects the return of the paroxyſm? In political as in private life the feelings cannot be ſet in oppoſition to the underſtanding, without experiencing a very ſenſible inconvenience; if, according to the dilatory maxims of theſe cautious politicians, we were to abſtain from applying a remedy till the danger became near and preſſing, and a bill of excluſion, or ſome

ſome meaſure equally violent, was then to be propoſed, it is evident that the feelings of the people would be powerfully intereſted in favour of the particular individual againſt whom that particular meaſure ſhould be directed; and it would certainly be regarded as a ſpecies of perſonal injuſtice, to which the moſt important conſiderations relative to the public welfare would ſcarcely be thought to give a ſufficient ſanction.

But, 2dly, It may poſſibly be objected by ſome, that the perpetuation of the royal dignity in the ſame family muſt have a tendency to impreſs upon the minds of the people a ſuperſtitious awe and veneration for the perſon of the monarch, and ultimately to revive and foſter the long exploded notions of indefeaſible right, paſſive obedience, non-reſiſtance, and that long train of abſurdities which ſeems naturally to flow from the idea ſo readily embraced by the vulgar, that the perſon of the chief magiſtrate is in ſome peculiar ſenſe ſacred and inviolable. I anſwer, that though I am diſpoſed to pay every degree of reſpect to an objection which appears to ariſe from a jealous attachment to the cauſe of liberty, this apprehenſion ſeems to me ſo very far fetched and fanciful, that it can ſcarcely be deemed entitled to a ſerious anſwer. Would the objector really be willing to incur all the inconveniencies ſo obviouſly reſulting from a transfer of the Crown to a new and foreign family, for the poſſible advantage

vantage of fortifying the minds of the people againſt Tory prejudices? If ſo, he is a bold ſpeculatiſt indeed. But what probability, or poſſibility I might ſay, is there, that arbitrary principles can ever become prevalent, whilſt this kingdom continues under the government of a race of Princes who muſt neceſſarily found their authority upon the baſis of civil and religious liberty? The Revolution is an event which can never be forgotten in the annals of Engliſh hiſtory; and as long as the memory of it is preſerved, ſo long muſt it be felt and acknowledged, that the genius of our conſtitution is irreconcilably at variance with the ſpirit of deſpotiſm. It is well known to be an eſtabliſhed maxim of our Government, that the King can do no wrong; and a wiſer maxim no Government ever adopted. Now, arguing upon the principles which an over-anxious caution might ſuggeſt, how eaſy would it be pompouſly to declaim againſt the political abſurdity and dangerous tendency of this maxim! yet we ſee that it is regarded as a mere political fiction, that no inconvenience in fact reſults from it; but on the contrary, that it is productive of very ſignal advantages. So if an uninterrupted ſucceſſion of princes of the preſent illuſtrious family were to fill the Britiſh throne for centuries to come, there is no room to apprehend that the doctrine of an indefeaſible hereditary right would receive the leaſt countenance from it. Public utility would

ſufficiently account for the eſtabliſhment of the general law, and where mankind are allowed perfect freedom of inveſtigation, it is impoſſible that any well-founded rational ſentiment, univerſally received, can ever be ſuperſeded by an opinion at once falſe, abſurd, and ridiculous.

ESSAY VII.

On the Connection between VIRTUE *and* HAPPINESS.

IN one of the admired diſcourſes publiſhed ſome years ſince by a celebrated Profeſſor of Rhetoric, we meet with the following paſſage: "Unjuſt are our complaints of the promiſcuous "diſtribution made by Providence of its favours "among men; from ſuperficial views ſuch com-"plaints ariſe. The diſtribution of the goods of "fortune indeed may often be promiſcuous, that "is, diſproportioned to the moral characters of "men; but the allotment of real happineſs is "never ſo." Now I confeſs that ſuch a view and repreſentation of human life as this, appears to me no better than a romance; and I am at a loſs to conceive what good purpoſe can be anſwered by attempting to diſguiſe the real truth, eſpecially when it lies ſo open to every man's experience and obſervation. In order to form any juſt concluſion, the preacher indeed tells us, that "we muſt have a faculty by which we can look into the inſide of hearts;" but as I preſume the learned Profeſſor does not mean to intimate that he is excluſively endowed with any ſuch power, I think myſelf at

full liberty to argue from the uſual data; and, notwithſtanding the peremptory tone of this deciſion, I will venture to affirm, that according to the moſt accurate obſervations I have been able to make on human life, Virtue and Happineſs are not inſeparably united; that when they are found in actual union, it ſeldom happens that the degree of Happineſs enjoyed by any individual bears an exact proportion to the degree of Virtue he poſſeſſes; and in no inſtance perhaps is that preciſe degree of Happineſs the ſole and neceſſary reſult of the virtuous principle. It may be thought that theſe are very dangerous conceſſions, ſuch as tend to weaken the intereſts of Virtue, and if generally received, to diſcourage mankind from the practice of it; but I have myſelf no idea that the intereſts of Virtue can ever be promoted by deſerting the intereſts of truth, nor do I admit that any truth can be ſtiled dangerous, if exhibited in a juſt light, and in its proper connection. If weak and erroneous arguments are employed to induce men to become virtuous, it ſeems to me a real ſervice to the general cauſe of Virtue, to expoſe the fallacy of them, and to erect her empire upon a firm and permanent baſis. A man who enters life under a perſuaſion that Virtue and Happineſs are inſeparably united, and that Happineſs bears a certain and determinate ratio to Virtue, and who forms a reſolution of leading a life of Virtue upon ſo narrow and ſelfiſh a principle, will find the ground upon which he ſtands very

very unſtable and ſlippery; and when that perſuaſion is once ſhaken, which will infallibly happen from a more enlarged acquaintance with the world, he muſt be in imminent danger of apoſtatizing from thoſe principles and reſolutions upon which he propoſed to regulate his conduct. In attempting to aſcertain the importance of a virtuous conduct and diſpoſition, we muſt proceed upon one of theſe three ſuppoſitions:—Firſt, That it is abſolutely certain, mankind are deſtined for a future ſtate of exiſtence, and that their happineſs or miſery in that ſtate will bear an exact proportion to the degrees of moral excellence or depravity to which they have arrived in the preſent life.—Secondly, That it is not certain that this will, but only probable that this may, be the caſe; and the degree of this probability may be infinitely varied in the apprehenſion of different individuals, according to the different light in which they may happen to view the evidences of this great truth.—Or, Thirdly, That there is no evidence whatever of a future ſtate, and that death will certainly put a final period to our exiſtence. Upon the firſt of theſe ſuppoſitions it would be very ſuperfluous to multiply arguments to prove that it is our higheſt intereſt to adopt that mode of conduct which is beſt calculated to ſecure our happineſs throughout the endleſs duration to which we are deſtined. On the ſecond ſuppoſition alſo it muſt be allowed, that extreme folly only can poſſibly induce any man to deviate from the paths

of Virtue, if there only remains a mere probability that by ſuch deviation his future and everlaſting intereſts may be eſſentially affected. Of this, therefore, I may ſpare myſelf the trouble of adducing any formal proof; but upon the third ſuppoſition, it becomes a very nice and curious queſtion indeed, how far it is the intereſt of a man to adhere inviolably, and in all circumſtances, to the undeviating line of rectitude. In the general, I think it cannot poſſibly be doubted by any one, that Virtue is more favourable to Happineſs than vice; but I ſhould regard myſelf as undertaking an arduous taſk, if I attempted to perſuade a man whoſe views extended no farther than this life, that his higheſt happineſs depended upon his ſcrupulouſly conforming to the dictates of a pure and perfect morality. I ſhould expect him to reply, if he ſpake the language of his heart, "I am ſenſible that it is my intereſt to adhere to Virtue in the main, *i. e.* ſo far as my reputation in the world is at ſtake, ſo far as is neceſſary to reſtrain my paſſions or ſenſual indulgences within the bounds of moderation: in a word, I know it is my intereſt to preſerve a ſound mind in a ſound body; but ſtill there are exceptions to a plan of perfect rectitude, which it is alſo my intereſt to take advantage of; for inſtance, I hold an office of public truſt, and I have an opportunity of embezzling large ſums without the poſſibility of a diſcovery. By my perſonal attractions, I am enabled to captivate the affections of the

the fair, and at once to gratify my vanity and amorous inclination. I value myſelf upon my ſpirit and courage, and ſkill in the uſe of weapons, and if honour calls me to the field, and my antagoniſt ſhould happen to fall, the pleaſures of revenge, it muſt be owned, are exquiſite." I ſhould be glad to know what reply it would be poſſible to make to a man who ſhould think, talk, and act in this manner; it would evidently be wholly fruitleſs, and even ridiculous, to attempt to make any impreſſion upon him by expatiating upon the native beauty and excellence of Virtue; upon its utility in promoting the general intereſts of mankind; and upon the conſcious ſatisfaction which would reſult from the love and practice of it. This would be to uſe a language which he could not comprehend. The idea of Virtue, abſtractedly conſidered, for ſuch a man, has no charms. The advancement of general Happineſs is to him a matter of perfect indifference, and inſtead of a conſcious ſatisfaction in the practice of Virtue, he is conſcious only of a fixed and unconquerable reluctance to conform to its dictates. Such a man has no reliſh for the refined pleaſures of the moral ſenſe, and it cannot be denied that he adds to his Happineſs by indulging, to a certain degree at leaſt, all his vicious propenſities. How is this then conſiſtent with the hypotheſis, that the allotment of Happineſs is never diſproportioned to the moral characters of men? But perhaps it may be ſaid, that this is not a fair ſtatement of the caſe, and

that all which is meant by recommending Virtue as the true ſource of Happineſs is, that it will certainly be found ſo by thoſe in whom the moral ſenſe has been early and diligently cultivated, whoſe modes of thinking and habits of acting have been pre-diſpoſed from infancy in favour of Virtue, and in whom the benevolent affections flouriſh in full life and vigour; and I certainly do not take upon me to affirm, that the world affords not any ſuch examples. I am ſenſible, that the faculty of aſſociation is of a nature at once ſo powerful and ſo flexible, that by an early and ſkilful direction of it, it is very poſſible ſuch an ardent and diſintereſted love of Virtue, ſuch a noble and animating principle of benevolence, may be generated in the ſoul, that, leaving the very idea of a future ſtate out of the queſtion, all the allurements of vice united would, to a man actuated by ſuch exalted ſentiments, appear contemptible in compariſon of the pleaſures to be derived from Virtue; but then it is evident, from the nature of the caſe, that this muſt be a very rare and ſingular inſtance, almoſt amounting to a prodigy; and that a few ſuch examples are by no means ſufficient to eſtabliſh the truth of the general maxim, that the virtuous are happy in proportion to the degree of Virtue they poſſeſs, nor indeed is it neceſſarily to be inferred that a man ſuch as we have in contemplation, who has arrived to the higheſt degree of perfection of which humanity is capable, muſt be therefore eminently happy, but only that he would, in conſequence of the

the exquiſite delicacy of his moral feelings, incur a greater degree of miſery by any occaſional deviation into vice, than by a reſolute adherence to Virtue, whatever perſonal inconveniences might reſult from the practice of it. Indeed, from the very nature of Virtue, it is eaſy to demonſtrate that it cannot, in all ſituations and circumſtances, be the intereſt of individuals invariably to adhere to it; for the eſſence of Virtue conſiſts in regulating our conduct by ſuch principles as are beſt calculated to advance the general Happineſs. Now as it frequently happens that the Happineſs of the individual ſtands in direct oppoſition to that of the public, it is the perfection of Virtue in individuals, in ſuch caſes, to ſacrifice their own Happineſs to that of others; but if we do not advert to that recompence of reward of which a future ſtate of retribution affords us a proſpect, how can ſuch a ſacrifice be rationally expected, or indeed how can it be rationally made? Here then is the grand, the remedileſs defect of that ſyſtem of morality which extends not its views beyond the preſent life. Self-love and ſocial are not the ſame, *i. e.* are not neceſſarily connected; and this defect becomes only the more apparent, from every attempt to palliate or diſguiſe it, or to ſubſtitute any other principle in the place of that juſt, ſolid, and permanent foundation of human conduct, a regard to our own true intereſt.

The moſt celebrated ſect of heathen philoſophers, I mean the Stoics, it is well known, pre-

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poſterouſly endeavoured to eſtabliſh a ſyſtem of perfect Virtue upon the baſis of pride. By an inflexible adherence to her moſt rigorous dictates, they boaſted, that they not only acquired an elevation of mind far ſuperior to the baſe and ignoble vulgar, for whom they did not pretend that this ſyſtem was calculated; but that they were raiſed to an equality with the Gods themſelves. They even aſſerted, that Virtue was not only the chief good, which their rivals, the Peripatetics, were content to maintain; but that it was the ſole good; and that the truly virtuous man muſt neceſſarily be ſupremely happy in the enjoyment of that good in all poſſible ſituations and circumſtances, even whilſt actually burning in the brazen bull of Phalaris. But philoſophers of modern times, to do them juſtice, are not chargeable with any ſuch exceſs of virtuous extravagance. Mr. Hume, who throughout his Treatiſe on Morals argues upon the ſuppoſition, that the preſent life includes the whole of our exiſtence, is extremely embarraſſed with this difficulty: he cannot indeed avoid touching upon it, but he takes care to do it as gently and cautiouſly as poſſible. It is remarkable, that, like the faſhionable preachers of the preſent day, he paints Virtue in the moſt charming colours. "Nothing appears," to uſe his own language, "but gentleneſs, humanity, benefi-
"cence, affability. She talks not of uſeleſs auſte-
"rity and rigours, ſuffering and ſelf-denial: ſhe
"declares that her ſole purpoſe is to make her votaries,

" votaries, and all mankind, during every inſtant " of their exiſtence, if poſſible, cheerful and " happy; nor does ſhe ever willingly part with any " pleaſure, but in hopes of ample compenſation " in ſome other period of their lives. The ſole " trouble which ſhe demands is, that of juſt cal- " culation, and a ſteady preference of the greater " happineſs." This is a moſt pleaſing picture of Virtue, and who, without reluctance, can diſpute the juſtneſs of the reſemblance;—it is however, like moſt other portraits of great artiſts, a flattering likeneſs. Truth and falſehood are indeed ſo artfully blended in this deſcription, that ſome degree of attention is neceſſary in order to ſeparate them. " The ſole trouble which Virtue demands is, that of juſt calculation;" but upon what data is this calculation to be founded? Upon the ſuppoſition of a future ſtate? Then Virtue ceaſes to be that ſmiling, gay and enchanting goddeſs deſcribed by Mr. H. She aſſumes another countenance, not indeed deſtitute of beauty, but of a ſevere and awful kind; her deportment is martial, and her air majeſtic; not a Venus, but a Minerva, armed with helmet, ſpear, and ſhield. In plain language, we cannot become really and truly virtuous at ſo cheap a rate as ſuch flattering repreſentations would ſeem to indicate. It requires great faith, great fortitude, great reſolution, and, however unpleaſant the words may ſound in our ears, great ſuffering and ſelf-denial, to attain to any very ſuperior degrees of Virtue. The grand maxim which

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we are invariably to keep in view is, that we are abſolutely prohibited to gratify, in a ſingle inſtance, our own intereſts, paſſions, or inclinations, whenever they are in the remoteſt degree repugnant to the general happineſs; and, on the other hand, that it is incumbent upon us, by all poſſible means, to promote the general welfare, and even to ſacrifice eaſe, fame, fortune, and life itſelf, whenever they come in competition with thoſe far ſuperior conſiderations to which Virtue exacts an abſolute and unreſerved ſubmiſſion. But the virtue which Mr. H. means to recommend, is of a very different complexion—it is, indeed, but another word for pleaſure: for according to his principles of calculation, it is ſufficient to ſtrike a balance here, and to give the preference to that mode of conduct which ſhall be productive of the greateſt ſum of happineſs to each individual in this world; for he is equally ready with Macbeth "to jump "the life to come." He is, it muſt be owned, well enough inclined to perſuade his readers, that the perſonal happineſs of each individual coincides with the general happineſs of mankind: but as this is a delicate point, he does not chuſe to expatiate at large upon it; though a little to preſerve appearances, as he cannot wholly avoid taking notice of the objection, he thinks it neceſſary to give us a ſort of anſwer, but one ſo trifling, evaſive, and unſatisfactory, as muſt ſerve to corroborate and enforce this formidable objection, inſtead of tending in any degree to alleviate the weight of it.

it. "If," says he, "a sensible knave alledge, that "though, as a general rule, it must be acknow-"ledged, that honesty is the best policy; yet it is "a rule liable to many exceptions; and he must "be allowed to conduct himself with most wisdom, "who observes the general rule, and takes ad-"vantage of all the exceptions. If a man thinks "that this reasoning much requires an answer, it "will be a little difficult to find any which will to "him appear satisfactory and convincing: if his "heart rebel not against such pernicious maxims, "if he feels no reluctance to the thoughts of vil-"lainy or baseness, he has indeed lost a consider-"able motive to virtue, and we may expect that "his practice will be answerable to his specula-"tions." Now I acknowledge, without a blush, that I am one of those who think this reasoning very much requires an answer; and yet I hope my heart rebels against such pernicious maxims as strongly as Mr. Hume's: but surely the proper question in this case is, not in what manner the feelings of men educated in strict habits of Virtue would prompt them to act? but, whether the objection is really well founded, and what influence a system of morals liable to such an objection would produce upon the sum of human life and happiness? Mr. H. seems to admit the objection to be, strictly speaking, unanswerable; but endeavours to raise a feeble barrier in support of Virtue, by opposing to its attacks certain mental feelings and associations which are known to be accidental, variable,

variable, and factitious. "Thoſe who are deſti-
"tute of theſe feelings," ſays he, "have un-
"doubtedly loſt a conſiderable motive to Virtue."
This is too true;—but then, Sir, I maintain, that
they ſtand the more in need of ſome other motive
leſs flexible in its nature, and more general in its
operation;—but this the philoſophy of Mr. Hume
does not ſupply. Upon his principles, Virtue
muſt depend upon *Honour* for her very exiſtence.
Honour is indeed "a ſacred tie, the noble mind's
"diſtinguiſhing perfection!" but if we imagine
that mankind will ever be greatly or generally in-
fluenced by a principle ſo refined and ideal, we in-
dulge a groundleſs and romantic expectation. To
baniſh the belief of a future ſtate from a ſyſtem of
morality, would lead to conſequences as dangerous
and fatal as a total abolition of penal laws would
produce in the framing, or new modelling, a plan
of civil polity. And if a man preſumed to hint
his apprehenſions, that the intereſts of Virtue might
ſuffer in conſequence of ſuch general abolition or
excluſion, would it be deemed very ſatisfactory
for a moral philoſopher, as he might pleaſe to ſtile
himſelf, to ſtand up and ſay, "That, in his opi-
"nion, the native charms of Virtue were ſuch,
"that ſhe needed not the addition of legal ſanc-
"tions;—that if any perſons had been influenced
"by thoſe ſanctions, they had, indeed, loſt a con-
"ſiderable motive to Virtue, and we might expect
"that their practice would correſpond with their
"ſpeculations; but that men of ingenuous minds
"had

" had an antipathy to vice too ſtrong to be coun-
" terbalanced by any views of temporal advantage;
" and if they were not reſponſible for their actions
" to GOD or man, yet peace of mind, conſciouſneſs
" of integrity, and a ſatisfactory review of their
" own conduct, were circumſtances very requiſite
" to happineſs, and would be cheriſhed and culti-
" vated by all who felt the importance of them*."
Notwithſtanding this fine harangue, I am inclined to think that the neceſſity of reſtoring theſe ſanctions would ſoon become apparent, and even the philoſopher himſelf be compelled to acknowledge the neceſſity in this, as in many other caſes, of making " the lofty head of Speculation bow to " groveling Experience!"

The narrow limits of a ſlight Eſſay do not permit me to purſue this intereſting inveſtigation farther; but enough, I hope, has been ſaid to eſtabliſh, upon a ſolid foundation, the following concluſions:

Firſt, As it is a truth which cannot, ſo it is a truth which needs not, to be concealed or palliated, that Virtue is not neceſſarily productive of, or connected with, temporal Happineſs. " *Dies deficiet*," ſays the Roman orator, " *ſi velim numerare quibus bonis malè* " *evenerit: nec minus ſi commemorem, quibus improbis* " *optimè*." To maintain, with the learned Profeſſor whom I have already quoted, that we are happy in exact proportion as we are virtuous, is, in other words, to aſſert, with the ancient Stoics, that Virtue

* Vide Hume's Eſſays, vol. ii. p. 350.

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is the only good, *i. e.* the ſole ſource of our enjoyments;—an opinion ſo contrary to fact and experience, that it is wonderful any man can ſeriouſly attempt to defend it. Are the pleaſures we receive from the ſenſes to be entirely left out of the account? Are the pleaſures of imagination nothing? Or, do we derive no addition to our happineſs from our literary and intellectual purſuits? If the moral ſenſe is carefully cheriſhed and cultivated, it is indeed the ſource of a very ſublime and exalted ſpecies of enjoyment. On ſome occaſions, however, it is rather the ſource of pain than pleaſure; and the more virtuous a man is, the larger ſacrifices of private happineſs he is diſpoſed to make to the general good; ſo that it may well admit of a doubt, if he has no future reward in proſpect, whether, upon the whole, his happineſs would be promoted by an undeviating perſeverance in a courſe of the moſt perfect Virtue to which a human being can attain. It ſhould ſeem that Virtue of a lower ſtandard, and mixed with a conſiderable portion of alloy, is better calculated for the purpoſes of this world merely. We ſee it paſſes every where current, and the acquiſition of it is by no means difficult. To ſpeak without a figure, I aſſert, that whatever we may ſuppoſe reſpecting a few ſublimer ſpirits, the bulk of mankind, I mean thoſe who are deſtitute of the finer feelings of Virtue, would certainly, in many inſtances, add to their temporal happineſs by deviating from the ſtrict line of rectitude; and I affirm, that there is no motive of a moral nature,

ture, but ſuch as a future ſtate furniſhes, of ſufficient force to deter ſuch men from the practice of vice. Hope and fear are the two grand ſprings by which that curious machine, the human mind, is actuated; and to deprive Virtue of that ſupport which ſhe receives from their influence and operation, and to ſubſtitute in their room a ſenſe of honour, or a love of moral beauty and order, is to betray the cauſe of Virtue. Secured by the awful ſanctions of religion, the temple of Virtue ſtands unſhaken upon a rock: but theſe, her falſe and pretended friends, would fain ſubvert that firm and ſolid foundation, and in lieu of it would erect an houſe for her upon the ſand; but if I may be allowed to borrow the language of Scripture, "When the floods come, and the winds blow, and "beat upon that houſe, it will inevitably fall, "and great will be the fall of it." Hence,

2dly, It is moſt unqueſtionably certain, that religion is of eſſential uſe and importance in promoting the temporal intereſts and felicity of mankind.

Were the belief of a GOD, of a providence, and of a future ſtate baniſhed from the world, it is evident that morality would ſtand on a foundation totally different from that on which it now reſts. We ſhould no longer be under an obligation, *i. e.* we ſhould no longer have any rational or ſufficient inducement to ſacrifice our own happineſs to that of others;—every individual would have a ſeparate and detached intereſt, which it would, in that

caſe, be his higheſt wiſdom to purſue, however contrary it might happen to be to that of his neighbour, or of the public. A principle of generoſity might indeed deter ſome men from embracing opportunities of promoting their own happineſs at the expence of others; but generoſity would be a feeble reſtraint indeed upon the great majority of mankind, who, when the powerful feelings of remorſe and fear were extinguiſhed, would be little ſcrupulous in gratifying to the utmoſt extent every paſſion and inclination, however depraved and corrupt, which could, in their apprehenſion, conduce to their own perſonal enjoyment; and the more completely a man could diveſt himſelf of every virtuous feeling and ſympathetic emotion, the more powerful in fact would be his inducement, the more it would be his intereſt, if one may be allowed to uſe an expreſſion at which the mind revolts, to ſacrifice the happineſs of others to his avarice, his ambition, or his revenge. It muſt however be acknowledged, that the evidence which nature affords of the great truths of religion, ſcarcely amounts to probability: upon that probability, weak as it is, had we no better guide, it would nevertheleſs be our duty and our wiſdom to act; but the truth is, that though in ſpeculation it is impoſſible to deny that ſuch a probability ought to influence our conduct as much as even a certainty, the impreſſion made by it is ſo weak, that it has never been found to produce any general or permanent effect upon the hearts and lives

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of mankind. The human mind is ſo conſtituted, as to ſtand in need of a ſpecies of evidence amounting much nearer to moral certainty, in order to effect any great practical purpoſe. How invaluable an advantage then ought the Chriſtian revelation to be deemed, which is ſo admirably adapted to the wants and wiſhes of man, and which exhibits the grand doctrines of religion in a light ſo juſt and clear; which enforces them by ſuch ſolemn and alarming ſanctions; and which confirms and eſtabliſhes the truth of them by a chain of evidence the moſt aſtoniſhing, the moſt convincing, the moſt deciſive. This religion has already produced effects highly favourable to the happineſs of the human race; and thoſe who are perſuaded of its divine authority, have the firmeſt reliance that it ſhall finally riſe triumphant over all oppoſition; and that the knowledge and beneficial influence of it ſhall, at length, cover the face of the whole earth, as the waters cover the ſea.

ESSAY VIII.

On GOVERNMENT *and* CIVIL LIBERTY.

PART I.

AN elegant modern writer, to whom the world is indebted for a ſtriking, and, in ſome reſpects, a juſt view of the internal evidence of Chriſtianity, has been pleaſed alſo, in a late volume of diſquiſitions, to communicate to the public his ſentiments on Government and Civil Liberty, which, conſidering the preſent advanced ſtate of knowledge relative to thoſe topics, are really ſomewhat extraordinary. He allows that the ſubject has been much hackneyed, but he is induced to take up his pen, in order to expoſe and confute thoſe "falſe and miſchievous prin-"ciples, which," he ſays, "have of late been "diſſeminated with unuſual induſtry, and are as "inconſiſtent with common ſenſe, as with all hu-"man ſociety, and which happily require nothing "more than to be fairly ſtated to be refuted." Who would not have ſuppoſed, from this preface, that attempts had been made to revive the exploded ſyſtems of Hobbes or Filmer, and that

that Mr. Jenyns, moved with juſt indignation to ſee the ſimple and rational principles of Mr. Locke again called in queſtion, after their authority ſeemed to be finally eſtabliſhed by a preſcription of almoſt a century, had determined to employ his eloquence and ſagacity in their ſupport. How great then muſt be our aſtoniſhment, when we diſcover that the principles which appear to Mr. J. ſo full of abſurdity and miſchief, and which diſturb his mind with ſuch alarming apprehenſions, are no other than the principles of Mr. Locke himſelf, and of his moſt diſtinguiſhed followers; and it is remarkable, that though in the opinion of Mr. J. they require no other refutation than to be fairly ſtated, they have been gradually gaining ground, not in England only, but through Europe, ever ſince Mr. Locke, in conſequence of the ever memorable revolution, was employed in the very act of refutation referred to by Mr. J. —— The firſt of theſe monſtrous poſitions is this: Firſt, That all men are born equal. Here Mr. J. has the candour to make a voluntary conceſſion. He allows that there is a ſenſe in which it may be true; and if it means only, *that all men are equally born*, he will not take upon him to diſpute the truth of it; and it muſt indeed be acknowledged, that if this is all that is meant, it does not ſeem to carry its own refutation along with it. Of this, however, Mr. J. is poſitive, that in every other ſenſe it muſt be falſe, for ſome are born beautiful and healthy, and ſome with

bodies diſtorted and diſeaſed; ſome with minds fraught with the ſeeds of wiſdom and genius, others with thoſe of idiotiſm and madneſs; ſome are born to affluence and honour, others to labour and poverty. Now how ſuch perſons can be ſaid to be born equal, meaning, no doubt, in the inſtances ſpecified, Mr. J. deſpairs, and I do not know who would not diſpair of being able to comprehend.—What a negligent writer was Mr. Locke not to advert to theſe common and obvious caſes of inequality, and to content himſelf with reſtraining his meaning to one preciſe idea; which, as the greateſt geniuſes are liable to trifling overſights, does not ſeem to have occurred to Mr. J, but which may ſerve as a ſalvo for Mr. Locke, and as a proof that Mr. J. was a little too haſty in aſſerting, that the propoſition would bear no other ſenſe than that very ingenious one which he may juſtly claim the merit of pointing out. In ſhort, I will venture to ſuppoſe, that by aſſerting the natural equality of mankind, Mr. Locke meant nothing more than to intimate, that all the diſtinctions of rank and power which prevail in civil ſociety, are artificial diſtinctions; they are all founded upon the baſis of public utility, and muſt invariably be conſidered as ſubſervient to that purpoſe. Where is the man who has a right to ſay, I poſſeſs inherent authority; and what ſpecies of authority can that be which he does not derive from the community of which he is a member? and to that community he muſt conſequently be reſponſible for the juſt and

and proper exercise of it. "But supposing," says Mr. J. "that they were all born equal, would "this prove what is always intended to be proved "by it, that they ought always to continue so?" Here Mr. J. seems to be chargeable with another trifling inaccuracy: instead of *always* intended, truth required him to say, *never* intended; and this amendment may supersede the necessity of an answer to the question, which he seems to put with some degree of triumph. Mr. Locke certainly never meant to infer from the natural equality of mankind, that civil and political distinctions were unlawful, or unjust; nor do I recollect the most distant intimation of such opinion in the writings of any of his disciples with which I happen to be acquainted. But Mr. J. perhaps thought, that as general rules admit of some exceptions, Mr. Locke's principles, in this instance at least, admitted of a better refutation by being unfairly, than even by being fairly, stated. But,

2dly, Another position, as monstrous as the former, is, That "all men are born free." This, Mr. J. affirms, is so far from being true, that the first infringement of this liberty is being born at all, which is imposed upon them without their consent, given either by themselves or their representatives. Now here I apprehend that this great politician falls into an error, similar to that which misled him with respect to the former position; for as in that case, by all men being born equal, he imagined nothing more could be rationally meant

than that all men were equally born, ſo in the preſent inſtance, by all men being born free, he ſeems to underſtand that all men are freely born; but though, in the former caſe, he would not take upon him to controvert the truth of the propoſition when explained in that ſober ſenſe which he affixed to it, in the latter he ſtrenuouſly denies, that even in this ſenſe the poſition can ſeriouſly be defended, and takes much pains to expoſe the abſurdity of it. "How can a man," he exclaims with a mixture of diſdain and indignation, "be "born free, who, during the firſt nine months of "his exiſtence, is confined in a dark and ſultry "priſon, debarred from light and air, till at "length by a habeas corpus brought by the hand "of ſome kind deliverer, he is ſet at liberty. And "what kind of liberty does he then enjoy? He is "bound hand and foot, and fed upon bread and "water for as long a period: he is afterwards placed "in a ſtate of the ſevereſt diſcipline, firſt under "a nurſe, and then a ſchoolmaſter, both equally "tyrannical in their ſeveral departments: in this "ſtate of ſlavery he continues, till he commences "involuntary ſubject of ſome civil government, "to whoſe authority he muſt ſubmit, however in-"geniouſly he may diſpute her right, or be juſtly "hanged for diſobedience;—and this is the ſum "total of human liberty." Now though I have undertaken, unworthy as I am, to offer a vindication, or an apology at leaſt, for Mr. Locke, and though his ſyſtem is upon the whole that which I

profeſs

profeſs to embrace, yet I do not ſcruple to acknowledge in the face of the world, that if Mr. Locke meant to aſſert, that man, by the conſtitution of his nature, has a free option whether he will be born or not, or that he can be conſidered, in any ſenſe, as a free and independent being during his cloſe confinement in that dark and ſultry priſon to which Mr. J. alludes, I muſt decline offering a ſingle ſyllable in his defence: and if Mr. Locke was ſo ignorant as to ſuppoſe, that an infant is in a capacity to enjoy the free uſe of his limbs for ſome months after his birth, we muſt charitably impute it to the misfortune of his being an old batchelor, and of courſe but little converſant with children. As for nurſes, ſchoolmaſters, and we may add kings, Mr. Locke certainly did not mean to deny that they were all tyrants in their ſeveral departments; nor did he attempt to inſinuate, that flogging would not be the probable conſequence of reſiſtance in the one caſe, or hanging in the other;—nay, he was far from denying that theſe puniſhments might be even juſtly diſpenſed;—all that he pretended to ſhew was, that the authority of the great and of the petty tyrant ſtood upon the ſame general foundation: that as there was no natural diſtinction between the ſcholars and the ſchoolmaſter, ſo there was juſt as little between the monarch and his ſubjects;—as the ſchoolmaſter was not born with an inherent right of flogging, ſo the monarch was not born with an inherent right of hanging, but that all were born equal and free, *i. e.* that no one man had a right

a right to aſſume a power of controuling, or of puniſhing another; but it did not follow, at leaſt Mr. Locke did not ſeem to ſuſpect that it followed, from thence, that it was not lawful or expedient for the community to inveſt certain individuals with different degrees of power, which they would be under an indiſpenſable obligation, ariſing from the nature of the truſt, to exerciſe for the benefit and advantage of the ſociety to which they belonged, and to that ſociety they muſt be ultimately reſponſible for the due and faithful execution of it.

3dly, We now proceed to the diſcuſſion of another ſhocking maxim; a principle falſe, miſchievous, inconſiſtent with common ſenſe, and ſubverſive of all civil ſociety, but a very favourite maxim notwithſtanding with ſome well-meaning ſimple people, who are ſo much in the dark as to be totally incapable of diſcerning its pernicious nature and tendency: it is this: That "all government is derived from the people." There is, indeed, a ſenſe in which Mr. J. admits even this maxim to be true. "It is true," ſays he, "that all government is ſo far derived from the "people, that there could be no government if "there were no people to be governed." This, it muſt be owned, is a moſt ingenious and happy explanation. How completely and dexterouſly is this pernicious maxim, upon which Mr. Locke, that blind guide, raſhly placed ſo great ſtreſs, diveſted of its venomous quality! How unſpeakable are the obligations of an author to a ſagacious and able

able commentator! According to the new interpretation of this famous maxim, a monarch derives his authority from the people exactly in the ſame manner in which a ſhepherd derives his power from his flock—if there were no ſubjects, there could be no king—if there were no ſheep, there could be no ſhepherd. If the admirers of Mr. Locke could ſo far lay aſide their prejudices, as to acquieſce in this interpretation, ſo natural and eaſy, how ſalutary and beneficial would be the conſequences! All animoſities and contentions reſpecting the theory and foundation of Government would be for ever precluded; for Hobbes, Filmer, and Mandeville themſelves, would not have the effrontery to deny, that in this ſenſe the axiom was unqueſtionably juſt; beſides, the fame and reputation of Mr. Locke himſelf would be greatly advanced by this means; for at preſent his principles ſeem ſomewhat unfaſhionable. His admirers are numerous indeed; but then not many noble, not many mighty, are to be found amongſt them; when once, however, thoſe principles are diſcovered to be capable of ſo liberal an interpretation, kings and princes may be expected to vie with each other in doing honour to his memory: we may expect to ſee his works tranſlated into the French tongue "*par ordre du* "*Roi;*" and a ſtatue erected for him at Conſtantinople by expreſs command of the Grand Seignor.

But though I ſo clearly diſcern, and ſo freely acknowledge, the immenſe advantages which would reſult from a general concurrence in this admirable interpretation

interpretation, I cannot ſo far forget myſelf, and the character I have aſſumed as the apologiſt of Mr. Locke, as to admit that the propoſition in queſtion will bear no other ſenſe than this. There is a ſenſe, which I am inclined to believe was the ſenſe intended by Mr. Locke, and which does not appear to me abſolutely incompatible with common ſenſe, nor, "*prima facie*," at leaſt to carry its own refutation along with it. All government is de- "rived from the people," *i. e.* all perſons poſſeſſed of civil authority, whatever be the form of government, are to be conſidered as holding their offices actually, or virtually, in conſequence of the choice or election of the people. In other words, Government is a truſt delegated from ſome particular community to certain individuals, for the general good and welfare of that community. It follows, that when that truſt is abuſed, the people have a right to reſume it, and to provide for their own ſafety in whatever manner they ſhall deem moſt eligible. Now that there is ſome plauſibility in this account, appears pretty evident, from this conſideration: That if this is not the true origin of Government, it can have no origin at all; for to ſay that Government derives its origin from force, is quite beſide the purpoſe. Mr. Locke is profeſſedly treating of juſt, lawful, and equitable government. If any government chooſes to found its authority upon force, that government in effect proclaims war againſt its own ſubjects; and reſiſtance from that moment becomes not only lawful,

ful, but meritorious. For any government to pretend to derive its authority immediately from GOD, is to add impiety to folly. We know that GOD wills the general happineſs; and Government is no otherwiſe an ordinance of GOD, than as it is calculated to promote the welfare of mankind; to plead "a right divine to govern wrong," is an abſurdity which none can ſwallow but "fools as groſs as ignorance made drunk." To refer Government ultimately to GOD, is the ſame thing as to refer it to general utility, which is the baſis on which Mr. Locke endeavours to fix it. Submiſſion to civil as well as parental authority, is indeed commanded in Scripture, without ſpecifying any particular exceptions; certainly not becauſe theſe general rules do not admit of exceptions, but becauſe common ſenſe is ſufficient to point them out without the aſſiſtance of an apoſtolic canon. Mr. J. contends, however, that "whatever right of "controul and reſumption the people may poſſeſs, "the exerciſe of this right is wholly impracticable "from the very nature of Government; for all "Government muſt conſiſt of the governors, and "the governed. If the people at large are the "governors, who ſhall be the governed? All go-"vernment is power with which ſome are in-"truſted to controul the actions of others; but "how is it poſſible that every man ſhould have a "power to controul the actions of every man? "This would be a form of Government in "which all are governed by all; that is, in other "words,

"words, where there is no government at all." How might it puzzle a plain man to reply to theſe elaborate and profound arguments, which ſeem ſo clearly to demonſtrate that it is abſolutely impracticable, in the nature of things, for the people to call their governors to account, and to puniſh them for mal-adminiſtration, if we fortunately had not plain matter of fact to appeal to in this caſe, and, in imitation of the immortal Chillingworth, who, on a well-known occaſion, thought it ſufficient, in anſwer to all that his antagoniſt could urge, to cry out, "the Bible! the Bible! the Bible!" we may, in the preſent inſtance, content ourſelves with exclaiming, "the Revolution! the Revolution! the Revolution!"

Mr. J. proceeds to make the following very extraordinary declaration: "I agree with theſe pretended patriots, that the people in every country have a right to reſiſt manifeſt grievances and oppreſſions, to change their governors, and even their conſtitutions, on great and extraordinary occaſions; whenever they groan under the rod of tyranny, they have a right to ſhake it off, and form a conſtitution more productive of liberty." Amazing! Can it be Mr. J. who makes theſe aſſertions? Why, Sir, Mr. Locke himſelf never broached a more falſe, miſchievous and dangerous doctrine upon the ſubject of Government than this. It contains indeed the very eſſence and quinteſſence of all that Locke, Molyneux, Prieſtley,

ley, and Price, have ſaid upon this topic. Who could have thought that Mr. J. ſhould be found, at laſt, to agree with theſe pretended patriots in this fundamental article of their political creed. It muſt be owned, indeed, that Mr. J. ſeems to agree with theſe pretenders to patriotiſm in this matter better than with himſelf; for at no greater diſtance than a page or two preceding this declaration, he peremptorily aſſerts, "that to ſubmit "or be juſtly hanged for diſobedience is the ſum "total of human liberty; that it is utterly falſe that "the people have an inherent right of reſuming the "Government, in caſe of oppreſſion, and that the "exerciſe of this right, if they had any juſt claim to "it, is wholly impracticable." So that, upon the whole, we ſee that it is the deliberate opinion of Mr. J. with which he has judged it proper to acquaint the whole world, that the people poſſeſs a right which they have no right to poſſeſs, and that they may lawfully and properly exerciſe a power which they have no power to exerciſe. The obſervations alſo which Mr. J. makes upon the definition of the term *people*, are very ſagacious, and he animadverts with the moſt juſt and pointed ſeverity upon thoſe men who audaciouſly aſſert, "That the peers of the realm, the repreſentatives "of the nation, the paſtors of the church, the "ſages of the law, and the whole body of ma-"giſtrates, do not come within the meaning of "the term: men who think that Solons and Ly-"curguſes are to be found only in tin-mines or "coal-

" coal-pits;" who deſcend into the bowels of the earth, not in ſearch of wealth it ſeems, but of wiſdom, and who have the preſumption to imagine, with Polonius, that they " can find where truth " is hid, though it were hid indeed within the " centre." " Theſe are not the men," ſays Mr. J. very cautiouſly and prudently, " whom I ſhould " chuſe to truſt with unlimited power;" and, for my part, I cannot but think them the more dangerous, on account of the aſtoniſhing ſecrecy with which they diſſeminate their ſentiments, and carry on their deſigns; inſomuch, that I really did not know, or even ſuſpect, that there were any ſuch men in exiſtence, till I was informed of them by Mr. J.: happy for us that his warning voice has ſounded in our ears; " Let no ſuch men be " truſted." It is now high time to paſs on to the Fourth Propoſition, which Mr. J. undertakes to confute, and which alſo, when fairly ſtated, as he affirms, confutes itſelf: The propoſition is this:

4thly, That all Government is a compact between the governors and the governed. Now it may be remarked, that as all the poſitions which Mr. J. has undertaken to confute, confute themſelves when fairly ſtated, it would not have been good policy, by any means, in Mr. J. to aim at making a fair ſtatement of them, which would of courſe leave nothing for him to do, he therefore indulges himſelf in a ſort of liberty not unuſual amongſt authors of very high reputation: I mean a liberty

a liberty of miſrepreſentation, by which contrivance he has acquired abundant ſcope for ingenious ridicule, as well as ſerious argument. Thus in the preſent caſe we may obſerve, that Mr. J. affects to conſider Locke, and the reſt of the pretended patriots whoſe principles he oppoſes, as maintaining, that at ſome remote period a formal agreement was actually entered into by the two contracting parties, by which the latter gave up part of their natural independence, in exchange for protection granted by the former; without which voluntary ſurrender no one man, or body of men, could have a right to control the actions of another; "but all this, ſays he, is a ridiculous fiction, intended only to ſubvert all government, and let mankind looſe to prey upon each other." Mr. J. beſt knows what purpoſe this *ridiculous fiction* was intended to anſwer, for he is indiſputably entitled to the honour of the invention. Thoſe pretenders to patriotiſm who inculcate the doctrine of a political compact, mean by it nothing more, than that the relative ſituation of the governors and governed in every civil community neceſſarily partakes of the nature of a compact. There is an original, a virtual, an implied compact, ſubſiſting between the two parties, and which muſt ever continue to ſubſiſt. The two grand conditions of this compact, and which conſtitute the reciprocality of it, are, on the one ſide protection, and on the other obedience. It is from the very nature of the caſe as eſſentially binding on the two parties

as if it had been executed with all the formalities of an agreement between two individuals. Obedience can never be due where protection is previouſly withdrawn; neither can protection be due where obedience is cauſeleſsly withheld. "But," ſays Mr. J. "compact is repugnant to the very "nature of Government, whoſe eſſence is com-"pulſion, and which originates always from ne-"ceſſity, and never from choice or compact; and "it is the moſt egregious abſurdity to reaſon from "the ſuppoſed rights of mankind in an imaginary "ſtate of nature; a ſtate the moſt unnatural, be-"cauſe in ſuch a ſtate they never did or can ſub-"ſiſt, or were ever deſigned for." Now I confeſs, with great deference to the judgment of this profound ſtateſman and politician, that in my ſimple apprehenſion, compact is ſo far from being repugnant to the nature of Government, that it is eſſential to the idea of an equitable and legitimate Government. If the eſſence of Government is compulſion, I ſhould be glad to know in what the eſſence of tyranny conſiſts: That a certain degree of compulſion muſt be exerciſed by every Government, in order to ſecure the ſalutary and beneficial purpoſes of Government, cannot be diſputed; but it no more follows from thence that compact is inconſiſtent with or repugnant to the nature of Government, than it follows in the buſineſs of common life, that a maſter who is intitled to exerciſe authority over his ſervants, and in ſome inſtances to diſpenſe puniſhments amongſt them, is not at the

the ſame time obliged, *i. e.* bound by compact, expreſſed or implied, to protect them from injury, to provide for their welfare, and to treat them with every proper and requiſite indulgence. The eſſence of Government is not compulſion, but protection; *i. e.* protection is the ſole end and object of Government; compulſion is entirely ſubordinate to it, and is no otherwiſe juſtifiable or admiſſible than as it is capable of being made ſubſervient, in ſome mode or other, to the advancement of that end.—Again, "Government," ſays Mr. J. "originates always from neceſſity, and never from choice or compact." If by neceſſity Mr. J. means only a political neceſſity, or an urgent and obvious want of ſome common bond of union, in order to maintain peace and order in ſociety, I am far from diſputing it; but then ſuch a neceſſity is very conſiſtent with ſuch a virtual compact as Mr. Locke contends for; nay, it implies it; for this neceſſity is either only another term for public utility, or elſe it ariſes from, and is founded wholly upon it: therefore, if that Government which is founded upon public utility implies that certain conditions are to be obſerved, the Government that is founded upon political neceſſity implies exactly as much; the diſtinction is merely verbal. But if Mr. J. means by neceſſity lawleſs force, then the idea of a compact is indeed excluded; but it is to be hoped that Mr. J. does not mean to inſinuate, that this is the foundation on which Government ought to reſt. If any ſovereign ſhould preſume to aſſert ſuch

a claim, there is no other remedy than to oppoſe force to force. " If he has riſen by force, then " force muſt pull him down." " But it is a moſt egregious abſurdity," ſays Mr. J. " to reaſon from the ſuppoſed rights of mankind in an imaginary ſtate of nature, &c." Now here I have again the misfortune to differ from this ingenious writer: for what he regards as an egregious abſurdity, appears not to me any abſurdity at all; but on the contrary, a very natural, eaſy and ſatisfactory way of analyzing the complex idea of Government, and of reducing it to its original principles. What ſhould we think of a mathematician who ſhould object to Sir If. Newton's demonſtration of the theory of gravitation, becauſe it is ultimately founded upon a few ſelf-evident axioms? With juſt as much reaſon does Mr. J. object to Mr. Locke and others, that their ſyſtem is founded on certain ſuppoſed abſtract truths. It is as true, that all men are born equal, as that all the parts are equal to the whole; and Mr. Locke is as much at liberty to argue from the former axiom, as Sir If. Newton from the latter; and it is no more neceſſary for one philoſopher to ſhow that men ever actually exiſted in a ſtate of equality, than for the other to prove that a whole was ever actually divided into parts. Mr. J. may perhaps think that both axioms carry their own refutation along with them; but Locke and Newton wrote for thoſe who thought they both carried their own evidence with them. Few perſons certainly will be found hardy enough, like Mr. J. to

call

call in queſtion the truth of the axioms themſelves; though it muſt be acknowledged, that many have doubted the truth of the ſyſtems which have been built upon them.

The Fifth and laſt of theſe falſe, miſchievous, and abſurd propoſitions, which Mr. J. has for the benefit of mankind undertaken to refute, leſt the refutation which ariſes from a ſimple ſtatement of them ſhould fail to produce univerſal conviction, is this: "That no Government ought to ſubſiſt any "longer than it continues to be of equal advantage "to the governed as to the governors." Mr. J——s's reaſon and underſtanding ſeem to ſuffer as rude a ſhock from this maxim as from any of the former. "If this propoſition is adopted, and by "advantage, wealth and power are to be under-"ſtood, there is an end of all government at once; "for the greateſt ſhare of theſe muſt be poſſeſſed by "the governors: on this principle, therefore, the "governed would have a perpetual right of re-"ſiſting, and every Government ought to be diſ-"ſolved at the moment of its commencement." Here then Mr. Locke and his friends are reduced to a moſt perplexing and perilous dilemma; either they muſt ſubmit to the diſgrace of retracting one of their favourite and fundamental maxims; or, they muſt acknowledge that the theory they adopt leads to an abſolute ſubverſion of all Government, and authorizes and eſtabliſhes, to uſe Mr. J——s's own words, "a ſyſtem of anarchy." Now, if I can by any "fetch of wit," contrive to extricate Mr.

Locke and ſo many other great men from this deſperate and forlorn ſituation, I ſhall undoubtedly acquire immortal honour, and erect for myſelf a monument more durable than braſs; even the attempt will be praiſe, and of the very failure it may be ſaid, "*Magnis excidit auſis.*" I will venture then to ſuppoſe, that when Mr. Locke, or any other writer profeſſing his principles, aſſerted, that no government ought to ſubſiſt any longer than it continues to be of equal advantage to the governed as to the governors, their meaning might poſſibly be, not that the governed ought to poſſeſs wealth and power equal to the governors, but that thoſe wiſe and beneficial purpoſes for which Government was inſtituted, ought to be extended no leſs to the governed than to the governors; that governors ſhould act upon this juſt and equitable principle, that it is as truly incumbent upon them to provide for the eaſe, happineſs, and ſecurity of the meaneſt claſs of ruſtics as of the higheſt rank of nobles; that if any individual entruſted with the powers of Government were ſo wanting in common ſenſe or common decency as to profeſs "the enormous faith of millions made "for one," if he could poſſibly be ſo ignorant of, or ſo far forget the nature of his office, and the obligations ariſing from it, as to ſuppoſe that his own perſonal aggrandizement, or the gratification of his ambition, his pride, or his revenge, were the objects for the ſake of which his fellow-mortals, born his equals, entruſted him with power; or if he

he demonſtrated by his conduct that he regarded his ſubjects as abject wretches, not poſſeſſed of any natural rights, nor entitled to claim legal protection as the reward of legal obedience, then that government ought no longer to ſubſiſt; the compact is broken, and the obligations ariſing from it are diſſolved; the people have a right to reſume the powers of Government, and to chuſe new Governors, who ſhall be better diſpoſed or better qualified to fulfil the important duties of their reſpective ſtations.

This I humbly apprehend to be the beſt interpretation which can be put upon the falſe, dangerous, and deſtructive maxim which Mr. J. has taken ſuch laudable pains to confute; and though Mr. J. may inſiſt, that when thus fairly ſtated it confutes itſelf, I muſt take the liberty to allege in behalf of Mr. Locke, that our preſent happy Conſtitution and Government are founded upon this very maxim. The Government under whoſe protection and patronage Mr. Locke wrote, was eſtabliſhed upon the ruins of a former government, which was not ſuffered any longer to ſubſiſt, becauſe the mutual obligations ariſing from the compact between the governors and the governed, had ſuſtained the moſt groſs and flagrant violation; and though the new government was ſo imprudent as to make choice of a vindicator whoſe firſt principles and fundamental maxims are "falſe, abſurd, and impracticable;" yet in one reſpect both

parties may be deemed eminently happy, that, notwithſtanding theſe maxims and theſe principles lie ſo extremely open to confutation, they have never yet been, and, without the moſt diſtant pretence to inſpiration, I will venture to propheſy that they never will be, *actually confuted*.

ESSAY IX.

On GOVERNMENT *and* CIVIL LIBERTY.

PART II.

IN the former part of this Eſſay I have endeavoured to vindicate Mr. Locke's principles of Government from the formidable charges brought againſt them by Mr. J.: and as in my judgment that vindication was conducted with all the ability as well as gravity which the ſtrength of the attack ſeemed to require, I hope I may now venture to conſider thoſe principles as being perfectly re-eſtabliſhed; and I truſt that the friends of Mr. Locke will the more readily excuſe the liberty which I am now about to take with them, on account of the very ſeaſonable aid and aſſiſtance with which, in a moment of ſuch imminent danger, I was ſo fortunate as to ſuſtain the credit and reputation of that great philoſopher. I ſay, to excuſe the liberty I am about to take; for my preſent deſign is, to point out and guard againſt certain unwarrantable and dangerous inferences and deductions which have, and frequently with the pureſt

pureſt intentions, been made from Mr. Locke's principles. And as the beſt things are liable to be perverted to the worſt purpoſes, I ſhould think myſelf happy if, by ſuggeſting a few ſalutary hints or cautions, I could in any degree contribute to prevent the noble and generous maxims of that juſtly celebrated writer, ſo favourable to the liberty, dignity, and happineſs of mankind, from being abuſed or made ſubſervient to the vile purpoſes of faction, anarchy, or licentiouſneſs.

I have now before me a very able pamphlet, publiſhed at the commencement of the late war with America, which bears the name of a moſt reſpectable man, who has equally and honourably diſtinguiſhed himſelf in the different capacities of a divine, a philoſopher, and a politician. The publication I allude to, in particular, contains very ſtriking marks of wiſdom and penetration: happy would it have been for this nation, had ſhe liſtened to his voice, and been guided by his counſels; but alas, "the things that belonged to "her peace were at that time hid from her "eyes." There are, however, ſome general remarks on the nature of Civil Liberty prefixed to this publication, which were, I think, juſtly regarded as exceptionable by many zealous friends of Liberty, and which gave occaſion to much animadverſion at the time they firſt appeared, and upon which I now propoſe to offer ſome impartial ſtrictures.

Liberty is a term of very comprehenſive import, and the celebrated author I refer to, Dr. Price, chuſes

choſes to conſider it under four general diviſions;—1ſt. Phyſical liberty; by which he means the principle of ſpontaneity.—2dly. Moral liberty; or, a freedom from the internal control or dominion of vice.—3dly. Religious liberty; or, a freedom from external conſtraint in matters of conſcience: and—4thly. Civil Liberty; which he defines to be the power of a civil ſociety or ſtate to govern itſelf by its own diſcretion, without being ſubject to the impoſitions of any extraneous will or power. It is very obſervable, that Civil Liberty, according to the definition here given of it, however juſt that definition may be when applied to a ſtate or civil community, is not at all analogous to the other kinds of Liberty here enumerated, which are entirely of a perſonal nature; and it ſeems to me that the Doctor has greatly confuſed his argument, by not ſufficiently attending to the diſtinction between that ſpecies of Liberty which belongs to a ſtate, and that which is the right of a ſimple individual. Civil Liberty in the latter ſenſe is, according to the accurate definition of Archdeacon Paley, "the not being reſtrained by any law but what conduces in a greater degree to the public welfare;" but the reſtraints which the public welfare indiſpenſably requires every government to impoſe, are ſo numerous and important, that it is very evident the Liberty of the individual muſt be extremely circumſcribed, in compariſon of that of the community. I do not mean to enter into the queſtion,

queſtion, whether one ſtate or community may lawfully exerciſe authority over another; or to what limitations ſuch authority ought to be ſubject: all I pretend to ſhow is, that Civil Liberty, conſidered as a perſonal right, is incapable of being enjoyed in that extenſive and romantic ſenſe for which Dr. Price ſeems to contend. I agree with Dr. Price then, that a civil ſociety, as ſuch, enjoys Civil Liberty, ſtrictly and properly ſpeaking, when it is not ſubject to the control of any foreign power; but when he afterwards takes occaſion to affirm, that Civil Liberty, in its moſt perfect degree, can only be enjoyed by ſmall ſtates, where every member is capable of giving his ſuffrage in perſon, I confeſs I am perplexed and embarraſſed. Is it the Liberty of the ſtate, or of the individual, which the Doctor is here ſpeaking of? Not of the ſtate; becauſe Civil Liberty, when applied to a community is, agreeably to his own definition, but another word for independency. Not of the individual; becauſe every citizen enjoys Civil Liberty in its moſt perfect degree, who is ſubject to no other reſtraints than ſuch as the public welfare, and conſequently his own happineſs, render neceſſary. In ſhort, the Doctor ſeems to me here evidently to confound the moſt perfect degree of Civil Liberty with the moſt perfect mode of eſtabliſhing and ſecuring that Liberty. I as readily acknowledge as Dr. Price himſelf can do, that all juſt Government is derived from the people, and that their happineſs is the ſole end and object of it; but I cannot comprehend

comprehend how, under any form of government, the people can rationally deſire or aim at any thing farther, than the full poſſeſſion of Liberty as above deſcribed, and the beſt ſecurity which the nature of the caſe will admit for the continuance of it. If we apply theſe obſervations to the reaſonings of Dr. Price, we ſhall find that he is chargeable with a groſs error; he has confounded the Liberty of the people with the power of the people. If the enjoyment of Civil Liberty is, as Dr. P. aſſerts, and all allow, what every man has a right to claim, it muſt be of ſome importance to aſcertain in what that Liberty conſiſts. Dr. Price ſeems to imagine, that Liberty conſiſts in a man's actually ſharing in the powers of Government, either in his own perſon, or in the perſon of his repreſentative. I maintain, that Liberty conſiſts in a total exemption from all unneceſſary reſtraint; and that power is no otherwiſe deſirable than as it contributes to the ſecurity of Liberty. It is very certain, indeed, that a degree of power is abſolutely neceſſary for the accompliſhment of that purpoſe; and a Government adminiſtered by the repreſentatives of the people is on this account, and on this account only, preferable to a deſpotic Government; becauſe under ſuch a Government there is a moral certainty that Liberty will be better promoted and ſecured. Civil Liberty is a natural indefeaſible right; but no particular form of Government can pretend to ſtand upon ſuch a foundation. Government is an inſtitution for the benefit of the people governed;

governed; and that form of Government which beſt conduces to the advancement of public happineſs, is the beſt government, whether it be monarchical, ariſtocratical, or democratical; and different nations, in different ſtates of ſociety, may require very different modes and forms of government. But if Liberty conſiſts in a man's being his own legiſlator, then all forms of Government but that of a pure democracy are unlawful. But Dr. Price allows that there may be the beſt reaſons for joining to a popular aſſembly an hereditary council, and a ſupreme executive magiſtrate; but what reaſons can thoſe be which will authorize a violation of the firſt principles of Liberty? For if perfect Liberty conſiſts in a participation of the powers of Government, by a delegation to a body of repreſentatives choſen for a ſhort term, and ſubject to the inſtructions of their conſtituents; the eſtabliſhment of an hereditary legiſlative council, inveſted with equal or nearly equal powers, muſt be a flagrant encroachment on Liberty, and the negative voice of a ſingle individual upon the reſolutions of the repreſentative body muſt be abſolutely irreconcileable with the faineſt image of it. Again, if the eſſence of Liberty conſiſts in a man's being empowered to give his ſuffrage on public meaſures, either perſonally, or by the intervention of a repreſentative, then it follows, that thoſe who do not actually enjoy this privilege, and who conſtitute a very great majority even in this country of freedom, are in a ſtate of ſlavery; and the female

male ſex in particular, not a ſingle individual of which is allowed to exerciſe this right, has no more reaſon to boaſt of its Liberty in England, than in Perſia or Turkey. If Dr. Price's definition of Liberty conveys the true idea of it, theſe objections will no doubt admit of a clear and eaſy ſolution; but as my imagination does not readily ſuggeſt this ſolution, I ſhall continue to think, till I am better inſtructed, that Dr. Price has been guilty of a radical error, in making Liberty to conſiſt in power, and what is ſtill worſe, in a particular mode of exerciſing that powe. But if Liberty conſiſts in a total exemption from every ſpecies and degree of reſtraint, which the public welfare does not render neceſſary; then we may, with propriety, proceed to conſider under what form of Government we may reaſonably expect that this ineſtimable privilege will be beſt ſecured, and by what means it is moſt likely to be confirmed and perpetuated; and I acknowledge, without heſitation 1ſt. That it is certain, Liberty will never be advanced to its juſt and proper extent under any other than a popular government; and—2dly. That if it could be ſuppoſed poſſible, that Liberty, under the protection and patronage of ſome patriot king, ſuch as the world never yet ſaw, ſhould be eſtabliſhed in the utmoſt extent which the public welfare and happineſs would admit; it is equally certain that no dependence whatever could be placed on the permanent poſſeſſion of it. Our experience of human nature does not permit us even

even to hope for such a succession of wise, just, and beneficent princes, as would effectually secure this system of Liberty from the danger of violation; therefore I allow, that a country under the absolute government even of a Lewis XII. or an Henry IV. may be said, in a sense not remote from truth, to be enslaved; even supposing that the forms of a free constitution were preserved, and that the blessings of Liberty were actually enjoyed. A nation which depends for the continuance of its political happiness, and the enjoyment of its civil privileges, upon the will of one man, is in a state of bondage, however mildly or beneficently the despot may exercise his authority. Nevertheless, this is the species of Government which Dr. Price deems preferable to that under which he has the misfortune to live. "If the persons," says he, "to "whom the trust of Government is committed are "chosen, for long terms, by a part only of the "state, and if during that term they are subject "to no control from their constituents, the very idea "of Liberty will be lost, and the power of chusing "constituents becomes nothing but a power lodged "in a few, to chuse, at certain periods, a body of "magistrates for themselves and for the rest of "the community. And if a state is so sunk, that "a majority of its representatives are elected by "an handful of the meanest persons in it, whose "votes are always paid for; and if, also, there is "an higher will, on which even these mock repre-

"sentatives

" ſentatives themſelves depend, and that directs " their voices, in theſe circumſtances it will be an " abuſe of language to ſay, that the ſtate poſſeſſes " Liberty: and rather than be governed in ſuch a " manner, it would, perhaps, be better to be " governed by the will of one man, without any " repreſentation; for a repreſentation ſo degene- " rated, could anſwer no other end than to miſlead " and deceive, by diſguiſing ſlavery, and keeping " up a form of Liberty, when the reality was loſt."

I preſume I do no injuſtice to Dr. Price in ſuppoſing, that theſe reflections were intended to allude to the government and conſtitution of our own country; and however laudable the Doctor's intentions might be, I cannot regard them in a more favourable light, in fact, than as a libel upon that government and conſtitution. It is a groſs miſrepreſentation, founded upon an egregious blunder. Dr. Price plainly miſtakes, and confounds in this paſſage, as almoſt every where elſe, Liberty with power. Monteſquieu truly affirms, that the power of the people, is not the Liberty of the people; but Dr. Price expreſsly argues upon the contrary ſuppoſition, and with him, Liberty is only another word for power. So far as the individuals of any community are admitted to participate, either perſonally or by repreſentation, in the management and direction of public affairs, ſo far, and no farther, they are poſſeſſed of Liberty. If the truth of this poſition be admitted, Dr. Price may indeed, with ſome appearance of reaſon, brand the Engliſh con-

ſtitution as a ſyſtem of ſlavery. It is moſt certainly not the end or object of this conſtitution, to inveſt all the members of the community, or even a majority of them, with that ſpecies of power, and much leſs with that right of control, in which Dr. Price makes Liberty to conſiſt; but it is the object of this conſtitution, ſo juſtly admired and celebrated, to ſecure all the ſalutary and beneficial purpoſes of government by the wiſeſt and moſt effectual means.

By allotting to a popular aſſembly the principal ſhare of legiſlative authority, the intereſts of the governors are inſeparably blended with thoſe of the governed; and thus, as Dr. Price himſelf obſerves, when a little off his guard, "it is impoſ-"ſible the repreſented part ſhould ſubject the un-"repreſented part to arbitrary power without "including themſelves." By eſtabliſhing another diſtinct hereditary body of legiſlators, conſiſting of men of the firſt rank, influence, and opulence, a firm barrier is preſerved againſt the ſudden and dangerous irruptions of democratic violence. Placed above the reach of vulgar prejudices, and free from the contagion of popular deluſion, ſuch an inſtitution is calculated to add wiſdom, ſtability, and dignity, to the meaſures of government; and the executive power is placed entire in the hands of a ſingle individual, in order that the meaſures agreed upon may be carried into effect with vigour, promptitude, and facility; and this great executive magiſtrate is allowed a negative upon the reſolutions

ſolutions of the other two branches of the legiſlative body, that he may be enabled to reſiſt any encroachments which the luſt of power inherent in human nature might induce them to make on his conſtitutional prerogative. For my part, I can never contemplate this ſingular plan of polity, and this admirable diſtribution of power, without emotions of rapture and aſtoniſhment! And when compared with the different forms of government which were adopted by the free ſtates of antiquity, or thoſe which at preſent ſubſiſt, its ſuperiority is ſo manifeſt, that I cannot but regard it as a ſpecies of ſtrange ingratitude for any man, who actually enjoys all the advantages reſulting from it, coldly and ſullenly to withhold his tribute of applauſe; and much more, with a kind of malignant pleaſure, to magnify and expoſe thoſe defects and blemiſhes which are inſeparable from every human inſtitution; and becauſe it does not, in all reſpects, quadrate with that ideal plan of perfect Liberty, which a ſpeculative ſtateſman may frame in his own cloſet, to repreſent it in an odious and debaſing light, as a ſyſtem even more to be deprecated and deteſted than abſolute deſpotiſm. Is it poſſible, might an enlightened foreigner exclaim with aſtoniſhment, who had ſeen and felt the dire effects of arbitrary power, that any ſuch perſons can exiſt? Yes, it is poſſible: and to encreaſe that aſtoniſhment, he might be told, that theſe very perſons were many of them men of the moſt diſtinguiſhed moral excellence, men of the

moſt extenſive philanthropy, of great learning, and of undoubted capacity; but who, inflamed with a romantic and impracticable idea of Liberty, were eagerly aiming to graſp a fleeting ſhadow, while they were in actual poſſeſſion of the ſubſtance.

The grand enquiry, in ſhort, is this: Does that renowned conſtitution of government under which we live, or does it not, ſecure to us the full and permanent enjoyment of thoſe rights which we may juſtly claim in a ſtate of civil ſociety? Dr. Price, without heſitation, will anſwer in the negative; "for the "perſons to whom the truſt of government is com-"mitted are choſen for long terms; they are choſen "by a part of the people only; they are ſubject to "no control from their conſtituents; and there is "an higher will, on which even theſe mock repre-"ſentatives depend: ſo that the very idea of "Liberty is loſt, and it is an abuſe of language to "retain the term." Let Dr. Price, however, declaim as long and as loudly as he pleaſes, it ſtill remains an inconteſtible fact, that from the æra of the Revolution, when the key-ſtone was put to this "Arch of Empire," Liberty, both civil and religious, has been enjoyed by the inhabitants of theſe kingdoms, in a degree far ſuperior to any thing known, or even imagined, in any former age or country. Under this government no ſacrifice has been made, in any inſtance, of our fundamental rights; but, on the contrary, ſince that period they have received

ceived ſeveral very ſignal and important confirmations; nor do I diſcern the moſt diſtant ſymptom of danger at preſent. If I choſe to oppoſe ſpeculation to ſpeculation, I would ſay, that the term of delegation ſeems to be a well-choſen medium; it is neither ſo long as to tempt the repreſentative body to forget its dependence on their conſtituents; nor ſo ſhort as, by frequent re-elections, to involve the kingdom in a perpetual ſcene of tumult and diſcord. I would ſay, that if the repreſentative body is choſen by a part of the nation only, that part is ſufficiently numerous to ſecure an inſeparable union of intereſts between the repreſentatives and the people at large, which is the only real uſe of repreſentation. I would ſay, if the repreſentatives, when choſen, were ſubject to no control from their conſtituents, that ſuch an entire freedom from control was abſolutely neceſſary to give dignity and efficiency to their proceedings; and that a body ſo choſen, was incomparably better qualified to judge what meaſures would moſt conduce to the public intereſts than the conſtituents themſelves, and would be influenced by the very ſame motives to advance thoſe intereſts to the utmoſt of their power; and that an appeal to the people upon every political queſtion that might ariſe, would be productive of every ſpecies of faction, anarchy, and confuſion. And as to the higher will, on which the repreſentative body is ſuppoſed to depend, if it refers to the in-

fluence of the executive magiſtrate, I ſhould not ſcruple to ſay, that, according to that theory of human nature on which every theory of Government ought to be founded, it ſeems to me abſolutely eſſential to the firm and permanent duration of the conſtitutional authority of that magiſtrate, that he ſhould poſſeſs a certain degree of influence over the legiſlative body. The conſtitution has indeed wiſely given him a negative upon their reſolutions; but whoever imagines, that, by virtue of that branch of his prerogative alone, he would be able to withſtand the continual efforts by which a natural love of power would infallibly and inſenſibly incite that formidable body to aſſail or undermine his authority, is but little acquainted with either theory or fact. Intereſt muſt be oppoſed to intereſt; and the ſole diſpoſal of the honours and emoluments of the ſtate, for this amongſt other wiſe and important reaſons, is placed in the hands of the ſupreme magiſtrate, that he may be enabled to check the irregular or exorbitant ambition of the legiſlative aſſemblies, by oppoſing the private intereſt of the individuals who compoſe it, to the public and collective intereſt of the whole body: and though it is impoſſible in this, as in a thouſand other caſes, to draw a preciſe line, and to ſay, with reſpect to the regal influence, thus far it ought to extend, and no farther; yet nothing can be more obvious, than that a total abolition of that influence would amount to nothing

leſs

leſs than an abſolute ſubverſion of the conſtitution.

I hope, however, I am in no danger of being miſunderſtood. I am far from aſſerting, that the conſtitution has arrived at its ultimate point of perfection; but I own, I have an inveterate diſlike to improvements merely ſpeculative and theoretical. If a grievance can be proved to exiſt, let the moſt effectual remedy which human wiſdom and prudence can ſuggeſt be applied to it,—and in this manner the conſtitution has, in fact, been gradually and inſenſibly formed; but of apprehenſions and ſurmiſes, there is no end. We all know what the conſtitution is at preſent, and we all feel the beneficial effects reſulting from it; but if innovations are continually made, in conſequence of the ſpecious ſpeculations of bold projectors, who can ſay what it may at length be?

The plans actually propoſed by ſome men of this claſs for ſtrengthening and confirming what they are pleaſed to dignify with the name of Liberty, and the bulwarks and barriers which they would erect for her defence, ſeem to me to the full as romantic and viſionary as the wall of braſs with which it is pretended that Friar Bacon, by his magical power, propoſed to guard the coaſts of Britain. For my part, I own, I am better ſatisfied with thoſe wooden walls by which we are at preſent defended, and with thoſe ſecurities, however

weak and feeble they may be deemed, by which our civil rights and Liberties have been hitherto preſerved from injury, and by which, for ages to come, I truſt, they will continue to be protected.

ESSAY X.

On the STUDY *of* METAPHYSICS.

A Popular Eſſayiſt, whoſe compoſitions are well calculated for the amuſement and inſtruction of a numerous claſs of readers, and whoſe real merit I am far from wiſhing to depreciate, has thought fit thus to expreſs himſelf on the ſubject of Metaphyſics: "For Metaphyſics what can be "ſaid? If every book that has been written on "them, and thouſands have been written, were "annihilated, not a ſingle individual in the com-"munity of all mankind would, in any one "reſpect, have juſt reaſon to lament the loſs. "Mathematical and arithmetical ſtudies are ſpecu-"lative, it is true; but they do not terminate in "ſpeculation. The builder, the navigator, almoſt "every mechanic art, is aſſiſted by geometry; "and all men, without exception, benefited by "arithmetic;—but Metaphyſics tend only to be-"night the underſtanding in a cloud of its own "making—to loſe it in a labyrinth of its own "contrivance." If to deal in poſitive aſſertions, unſupported by even the ſhadow of a proof, and without the ſlighteſt acquaintance with the ſubject reſpecting

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ing which the aſſertor ventures ſo boldly to decide, be to write dogmatically, we have, in the paſſage now quoted, as curious and complete an inſtance of the dogmatic ſtyle as I recollect ever to have met with. But this is not the only opportunity Mr. K—x has taken of expreſſing his diſlike and contempt of all metaphyſical diſcuſſions; to which, for my own part, I pay exactly the ſame regard as I would to the opinion of a blind man, who ſhould take it into his head to declaim upon the inutility of the ſtudy of optics; or as Mr. K. himſelf would do to many a worthy citizen, who ſhould declare his full conviction of the folly of waſting time upon the ſtudy of Latin and Greek. That branch of philoſophy which is diſtinguiſhed by the term "Metaphyſics," comprehends in it a variety of topics, ſome of which are the moſt refined and curious, and others the moſt intereſting and important, which the human mind is capable of inveſtigating; and what degree of knowledge reſpecting theſe points is really attainable, can no more be aſcertained by a mere claſſical ſcholar, than the moſt illiterate clown can pretend to form a conjecture concerning the truth or importance of the Newtonian Theory. Mr. K. expreſſes his regret, that ſo much ſtreſs is laid upon the ſtudy of Metaphyſics in the general plan of academical education; and yet it is difficult to ſay, if it is at all to enter into the general plan, how leſs ſtreſs could well be laid upon it. I differ ſo much from Mr. K. upon this ſubject, that I do not ſcruple to ſay, I wiſh much

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more ſtreſs was laid upon it. I firmly believe it would be productive of the happieſt conſequences. Thoſe who have capacities at all adequate to the contemplation of ſubjects of this nature, and apply themſelves to the ſtudy of Metaphyſics early and methodically, I believe, almoſt invariably become deeply intereſted and engaged in the purſuit; and when a habit of attention to ſtudies of this nature is once acquired, a point of the higheſt importance is gained. The magnitude and ſublimity of theſe diſquiſitions have a manifeſt tendency to elevate the mind, to leſſen in our eſtimation the value and importance of temporal purſuits, to inſpire a certain dignity and ſuperiority of ſoul; and, by the intimate relation they bear to religion, both natural and revealed, to make the moſt beneficial, as well as durable, impreſſions upon the heart. How is it poſſible to make that ſtupendous Being, who called the univerſe into exiſtence, the ſubject of our frequent philoſophical meditations, without feeling emotions of awe, gratitude, and devotion? Who can reflect without ſome degree of moral improvement upon that miracle of divine power and ſkill, the human frame? "What a piece of work is man! how "noble in reaſon! how excellent in faculty!—in "form and moving, how expreſs and admirable! "in action, how like an angel! in apprehenſion, "how like a God!—the beauty of the world!—the "paragon of animals!" Were it "to conſider "too curiouſly," to enquire whether that principle

ciple of intelligence and perception which raiſes us ſo high in the ſcale of exiſtence, be the reſult of an exquiſite arrangement of material particles? or, whether it is capable of ſubſiſting independently of the corporeal frame to which it is at preſent united? Or is it poſſible to employ our thoughts and imaginations upon a ſubject of ſuch infinite moment, without feeling our hearts glow with an animating hope that death may be nothing more than a change in the manner of our exiſtence? Or, if the natural proofs of this grand fact be indeed deficient, how much importance does it add to that divine revelation, which, in the moſt unequivocal terms, aſſerts the doctrine of a future reſurrection! —To ſay no more, who can contemplate the amazing extent and flexibility of the power of aſſociation, as explained and illuſtrated by Locke and Hartley, or the mechanical operation of motives in producing all our volitions, without being ſenſible of the unſpeakable importance of attending to the early cultivation of the mind, and of inculcating, with all poſſible diligence, thoſe laudable and virtuous principles which, ſo far as they are not counteracted by oppoſite influences, muſt operate upon the mind in a regular and definite manner? If Mr. K. cannot ſee the uſe or advantage of theſe ſpeculations himſelf, I would adviſe him, at leaſt, not to attempt to exerciſe his wit upon thoſe that do; or affect to treat theſe topics as trifling or ridiculous. Why ſhould any man, who happens to have no reliſh or capacity himſelf for theſe ſublime

reſearches,

reſearches, wiſh to deter others from employing all the powers and faculties of their minds upon theſe, as well as other ſubjects equally myſterious to the vulgar, what is difficult to explain, what is dark to illumine? While thus engaged, the mind feels its own weakneſs, it is true; but it feels its own ſtrength and dignity too.

" Sure, He that made us with ſuch large diſcourſe,
" Looking before and after, gave us not
" That capability, and godlike Reaſon,
" To ruſt in us unus'd!"

I do not heſitate to aſſert, that a mere claſſical ſcholar, however poliſhed his language, or refined his taſte, in real elevation and comprehenſion of mind, is as much inferior to the man who has attained to an intimate knowledge of the writings of Locke and Hartley, who has converted the ſimple and admirable theory of thoſe great philoſophers to all thoſe excellent practical purpoſes to which the latter, in particular, has ſo ably ſhewn they are capable of being applied; I ſay, to ſuch a man, the mere claſſical ſcholar is as much inferior, as he is in his own eſtimation ſuperior to the moſt ignoble of the vulgar. Dr. Akenſide, I remember, remarks, that it is hardly poſſible to conceive Philoſophy and Taſte at a greater diſtance from each other, than at the period of the Revolution, when Locke ſtood at the head of the one, and Dryden of the other. But if they muſt be conſidered as in a ſtate of oppoſition, and the characters of Dryden and Locke are to be placed in the balance together, ſurely the " *bel eſprit*," in

in compariſon with the philoſopher, muſt appear as light as a peacock's feather weighed againſt an ingot of gold. I am far, however, from thinking an union between Philoſophy and Taſte impracticable. The writings of Cicero alone afford ſufficient proofs, how ſuſceptible the moſt abſtract topics of philoſophy are of the embelliſhments of imagination; and I cannot help remarking by the way, what an inexpreſſible charm, and what an addition of dignity, the character of Cicero derives from the anxious ſolicitude with which he purſued thoſe reſearches, which the conductors of "Liberal Education" in our times affect to treat with ridicule and contempt. But though I would pay a ſuperior regard to that which appears to me of ſuperior excellence and importance, I do not deem lightly of the uſe or value of claſſical literature. I am not inſenſible to the exquiſite beauties of thoſe ancient writings, which are juſtly regarded as the moſt perfect models of literary excellence; nor am I a ſtranger to the refined pleaſures to be derived from this ſource. In the preſent ſtate of things alſo, claſſical learning is ſo intimately blended with every other ſpecies of knowledge, that the ſtudy of the dead languages is become a matter of indiſpenſable neceſſity to thoſe who entertain the remoteſt views of intellectual improvement. But what I regard as a juſt ſubject of complaint is, that claſſical literature is made too much an ultimate object. There are many men of good natural underſtandings, and who paſs for what is generally called good ſcholars, who

who are, in fact, moſt deplorably ignorant. They ſeem to conſider the attainment of the learned languages as the great end of life; and as that is the ſpecies of learning which is moſt ſerviceable in the acquiſition of academical honours, it is too frequently thought all that is neceſſary; and a total ignorance of thoſe ſublime inveſtigations, which open a new world to our intellectual view, is very eaſily convertible into a groſs and ſtupid contempt of them.

In one of our univerſities, indeed, mathematical ſcience engages a very great, and I think a very diſproportionate ſhare, of the general attention. It has been often aſſerted, that the ſtudy of Mathematics contributes to ſtrengthen the judgment, to check the rovings of fancy, to fix the attention, and inſenſibly to infuſe into the mind an habit of thinking accurately, and of arguing with preciſion, even upon moral and philoſophical ſubjects. This is an opinion ſo plauſible, that I do not wonder it ſhould be favourably received; though I do not believe that there is any maxim more entirely deſtitute of foundation, or one which is leſs able to abide the teſt of examination and experience. If we conſider the fundamental difference which ſubſiſts between mathematical and moral reaſonings, I think we muſt acknowledge, that it is abſolutely impracticable to transfer our ideas from the one to the other, ſo as to derive any advantage from the experiment. Nay, I will venture to affirm, that mathematicians have often been betrayed

betrayed into egregious abſurdities, by attempting to introduce mathematical ideas into ſubjects where they are totally inapplicable. Would the famous Profeſſor Wallis, for inſtance, if he had not been a mathematician, ever have expoſed himſelf to general ridicule, by comparing the three perſonal diſtinctions of the Godhead to the three dimenſions of a cube, and the Godhead itſelf to a cube infinitely extended? If the ſtudy of Mathematics contributes ſo much to beſtow preciſion and accuracy in our reaſonings on moral ſubjects, how can it be accounted for that Paſcal, that prodigy of mathematical genius, ſhould not have been able to diſcover the abſurdity of the Popiſh doctrine of tranſubſtantiation? And as the mathematics are much cultivated in the catholic countries, ſurely we might reaſonably form a general expectation, that thoſe at leaſt who were eminently diſtinguiſhed by their mathematical abilities, ſhould be as remarkable for their freedom from vulgar prejudices. If their ſkill in geometrical ſcience could be ſuppoſed to have any influence upon their general habits of thinking and reaſoning, it is fair to infer, that they muſt at leaſt be exempt from the groſſer errors of the popular ſuperſtition; but it happens unluckily to be well known, that the Jeſuits were not only the moſt able mathematicians, but the moſt deplorable bigots of modern times. In fact, moral truth, not admitting, ſtrictly ſpeaking, of demonſtration, *i. e.* of a ſpecies of proof which conſiſts of the regular and uninterrupted deduction

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of one ſelf-evident propoſition from another, bears no analogy to mathematical truth, and requires a totally different kind of ſupport. In its attempts to inveſtigate moral truths, the mind is perpetually occupied in the compariſon of probabilities; and the man, whoſe attention has been ſolely engroſſed by the contemplation of truths, ſupported by infallible reaſoning, will be as much at a loſs when he is called upon to eſtimate the value of oppoſing probabilities, as if he had been taken immediately from the loom, or from the plough; and if the appeal is made to real life, and actual obſervation, I believe it will almoſt invariably be found, that thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed by a ſtrong predilection for mathematical purſuits, are the men whoſe views and ſentiments upon other ſubjects are remarkably narrow and contracted, their reaſonings confuſed and inconſequential, and their general habits of thinking illiberal and vulgar; ſuch inſtances as a ſlight acquaintance with the world will furniſh, are ſufficient to demonſtrate, in oppoſition to the moſt ſpecious ſpeculations, that mathematical knowledge has not that tendency to enlarge the mind, or to ſtrengthen the judgment, which many fanciful people are apt to imagine. Nevertheleſs, geometry is undoubtedly in itſelf a noble and important branch of ſcience, and the elements of it, at leaſt, ought to be well underſtood, by thoſe who aſpire to the praiſe of a liberal education; but I do not think that it is neceſſary, or proper, to make it a primary object

with the generality of ſtudents, who uſually enter upon the ſtudy with diſguſt, who are ſeldom deſirous, or perhaps capable, of making ſuch a proficiency in it as to derive any real advantage from it; and who not unfrequently, when they have once forſaken the walls of the College, inſenſibly loſe, by neglect, the knowledge they had acquired by long and laborious application; or if it is retained, it produces no viſible effect upon their general modes of thinking or acting. "We recog-"nize immediately," ſays the author of the Rambler, "the philologiſt, the critic, the philo-"ſopher, or the man of taſte; but years after "years may elapſe, before we diſcover that the "man with whom we have frequent intercourſe "is an able mathematician," However important mathematical ſcience may be deemed, as it relates to the community, with reſpect to ſuch perſons, it in fact terminates in ſpeculation, which is the reproach Mr. K. wiſhes, though moſt unjuſtly, to fix upon the Study of Metaphyſics; but this is not all: "Metaphyſics," according to Mr. K. "tend only to benight the underſtanding in a "cloud of its own making; to loſe it in a laby-"rinth of its own contrivance." With regard to this charge, the queſtion may not improperly be put to Mr. K. "Speakeſt thou of thyſelf, or of "ſome other man?" Thoſe who pay only a ſlight and ſuperficial attention to any ſubject of an abſtruſe and recondite nature, are very willing, and find it very eaſy, to perſuade themſelves, that the cloud

cloud in which they are involved, neceſſarily ariſes from the ſubject itſelf; and are rarely inclined to ſuſpect their own ignorance, incapacity, or prejudice. It muſt, however, be acknowledged, that Metaphyſics cannot be wholly vindicated from the charge of obſcurity; a certain degree of darkneſs and doubt hangs over all our inveſtigations on theſe myſterious ſubjects; but we ought carefully to diſtinguiſh between that obſcurity which ariſes from the nature of the ſubject, and which is neceſſarily connected with it, and the obſcurity which ariſes from the want of a proper and adequate attention to the ſubject; and I am ſtrongly inclined to ſuſpect, that it is this latter ſpecies of obſcurity, which by thoſe who are moſt fond of declaiming againſt the Study of Metaphyſics, is almoſt invariably miſtaken for the former.

"Metaphyſics," Mr. K. further obſerves, "were "once encouraged and cultivated, becauſe they "ſerved the purpoſes of ſuperſtition. They involved "theological ſubjects in a perplexity which the "ſimple could never unravel. They gave an air "of myſtery and depth which caught the admi- "ration of the vulgar. They are now employed "in a ſimilar manner in the ſervice of infidelity. "They have induced the half-learned and the "conceited, thoſe who think they underſtand "them, and thoſe who wiſh to be thought by "others to underſtand them, to adopt, without "being apprehenſive of danger, opinions fatal to "their own happineſs, and to the exiſtence of

" ſociety." Notwithſtanding the volubility and ſmartneſs of this declamation, I hope Mr. K. will not think he concedes too much in granting, that even in Metaphyſics there is ſuch a diſtinction as truth and falſehood; and that of two oppoſite opinions, if one is wrong, the other muſt be right; and, I preſume, I may further be allowed to ſuppoſe, that the metaphyſical notions to which Mr. K. alludes in the laſt paragraph, as having been productive of ſuch extenſive miſchief, are in themſelves falſe and erroneous. Now I ſhould be glad to be informed how theſe falſe and dangerous metaphyſical opinions, opinions which have produced effects ſo fatal to the happineſs, and even to the exiſtence of ſociety, can ever be properly and ſatisfactorily confuted, but by metaphyſical arguments? Certainly, juſt and rational ſentiments in Metaphyſics muſt be ſerviceable to the general cauſe of virtue and happineſs, in exactly the ſame proportion that the falſe and abſurd opinions to which he refers are prejudicial and dangerous. No doubt the Study of Metaphyſics may, in particular inſtances, have produced an unhappy effect upon the minds of the half-learned and conceited; upon thoſe whoſe capacities were unequal to the diſcuſſion of ſubjects of this nature, or upon thoſe who engaged in the purſuit of them with previous corrupt and vicious propenſities. The ſtudy of theology is likewiſe liable to the ſame objection; but what then? To borrow the noble and deciſive argument of Hamlet, " If the ſun breed maggots

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"in a dead dog," is that glorious luminary therefore to be reproached? The intereſts of truth, virtue, and happineſs, are inſeparably connected; and if Mr. K. thinks that any particular opinions in Metaphyſics are unfavourable to virtue and happineſs, why ſhould he deſire to prevent any man, who has paid a proper attention to the ſubject, from attempting to expoſe the fallacy and falſehood of them? He aſſerts, however, that "Even when "cultivated by the honeſt and truly ingenious, "they exhibit an inſtance of blameable pride; "they aim at a ſcience to which man can never "attain. It is truly laughable to obſerve a crea-"ture, with hardly knowledge enough of the "things around him to guide him with ſafety, "perplexing himſelf with ontological enquiries "into the nature of angels, and the eſſence of the "devil." But Mr. K. who ſeems to apply to metaphyſical debate what Solomon ſays of contention in general, "that it ſhould be left off before it be "meddled with," is certainly a very incompetent judge what degree of attainment may be reached by ſuch men as Locke, Hartley, and Clarke; and let their attainments be ever ſo ſlender, I cannot agree with Mr. K. that it is an inſtance of blameable pride to engage in diſquiſitions of this nature, becauſe, previouſly to the trial, I preſume no man, I mean Mr. K. excepted, can pretend to ſay, what degree of proficiency it is practicable to arrive at. Alſo, as I have no objection to join in a laugh, I wiſh Mr.

K. had been ſo obliging as to have ſpecified the names of thoſe writers who have "perplexed themſelves by ontological enquiries into the nature of angels, and the eſſence of the devil." I acknowledge they have totally eſcaped my notice and obſervation; and if we could for a moment ſuppoſe, after the authentic information we have received from Mr. K. that there really were no ſuch writers, it would not, I think, be amiſs, rather than be diſappointed of a laugh, to direct it againſt the man who may have credulity enough to believe, or effrontery enough to affirm, that there are perſons who actually employ themſelves in ſuch prepoſterous ſpeculations.

"The ontologiſts and pneumatologiſts, the *nominales* and *reales*, the *doctores ſeraphici*, and all the tribe of microſcopic philoſophers, are in the preſent age of diſcernment," as Mr. K. further informs us, "totally neglected. Even Malebranche and Locke, the moſt rational of the metaphyſicians, are daily loſing ground. A few, however, in the preſent times, have been ſo unfortunate as to waſte their labour in defending Materialiſm, in expatiating on Liberty and Neceſſity, and in proving that man is no more than an animal." It is true, the metaphyſical opinions of the middle ages, as contained in the laborious works of thoſe philoſophers who go under the general denomination of the Schoolmen, many of whom were men of admirable talents, and the whole Ariſtotelian ſyſtem, are now exploded. The dogmas of

of the Stagyrite are juſtly ſuperſeded by the more rational and intelligible hypotheſis of Des Cartes and Locke; but whoever repreſents this total change of ſyſtem, as a proof of the uncertainty and futility of metaphyſical reſearches in general, ſhould recollect, that natural philoſophy has undergone a revolution equally ſtriking; that the ſyſtem of Locke and Hartley does not differ more from that of Thomas Aquinas, than the Newtonian theory of the univerſe does from the Ptolemaic. In the preſent age of diſcernment, however, it ſeems, that even Locke is daily loſing ground; and whenever the diſcernment of the age ſhall happily arrive to an equality with that of Mr. K. the Eſſay on Human Underſtanding will no doubt be completely diſcarded. It is not by force of argument, indeed, that Mr. Locke's ſyſtem is to be demoliſhed. Our modern men of diſcernment have found out a method of attack much more pleaſant, as well as effectual. In ſhort, they are determined to laugh it out of countenance; and this new ſect of laughing philoſophers are fortunately able to boaſt of a leader in Mr. K.'s eſtimation every way worthy of his diſtinguiſhed rank and ſtation. "Such miſerable effects of metaphyſical reſearch," ſays Mr. K. "have induced an amiable writer, whoſe "heart and abilities vie with each other for excellence, to vindicate the nature and immutability of Truth, to expoſe the futility of Metaphyſics, to confound the devices of its patrons, "and to eſtabliſh the natural rights of common

" ſenſe." This formidable champion has, it ſeems, given " the laſt fatal blow to languiſhing ſophiſtry."

To be ſerious, I am as willing as Mr. K. to allow every poſſible degree of merit to Dr. Beattie's intentions. Dr. B. ranks very high in that claſs of men, amongſt whom Mr. K. himſelf makes no contemptible figure: I mean the men of claſſical taſte and polite literature; and his truly elegant and ingenious productions I have read with peculiar pleaſure; but notwithſtanding the high encomium paſſed upon him by Mr. K. I acknowledge I entirely coincide in opinion with thoſe who think it fortunate for Dr. B. that his literary reputation does not depend upon his ſkill in Metaphyſics. In my apprehenſion, Truth is under little obligation to a champion, who confeſſes his inability to oppoſe argument to argument, and ſilence ſophiſtry by juſt reaſoning; and who, by way of compenſation, pretends to erect for her protection, as a dernier reſort, a court of appeal, in which a pretended infallible judge, a kind of Pope, preſides, ſtiled by Dr. B. " *Common Senſe*;" but I ſuſpect his true name is " *Vulgar Prejudice*;" who decides in caſes which have been thought very intricate without a moment's heſitation, and without giving himſelf the trouble to hear counſel on either ſide, though both parties are very deſirous of pleading their reſpective cauſes; and alledge, that they have much to offer in their own defence. I will not however aſſert, that Dr. Beattie's elaborate work is without its uſe.

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An honeſt well-meaning man, ſuch as Mr. K. deſcribes in his forty-ſecond Eſſay, who for the firſt forty or fifty years of his life has ſtudied no other books than his journal and ledger, and afterwards retires into the country to ſtudy Berkeley and Hume, may well be alarmed, when he finds that between them he is abſolutely in danger of being argued out of his exiſtence; ſince one undertakes to prove that he has no ſoul, and the other clearly demonſtrates that he has no body. But when he opens this incomparable treatiſe of Dr. B. he is overjoyed to find that he is indeed the very ſame identical perſon that he took himſelf to be before he began to ſtudy Metaphyſics; and he has the ſatisfaction to be informed, as he proceeds in the farther peruſal of the work, that he may become an able metaphyſician at a much eaſier rate than he himſelf hoped for, or could have imagined. In ſhort, he is told that common ſenſe alone, without any previous inſtruction, is ſufficient to enable a man to decide upon the moſt abſtruſe queſtions in that abſtruſe ſcience, and he ſhuts the book again fully convinced that he is as great a philoſopher as Locke, Berkeley, or Hume; and he is now completely qualified to exclaim againſt all Metaphyſics, as futile, uſeleſs, unintelligible, and dangerous; and fully prepared to aſſert, that a ſingle ſermon of Tillotſon * has done more real good than all the metaphyſical works of Dr. Clarke; and, to ſhow

* Vide Eſſay 168.

that

that he is biaſſed by no blind partiality for that famous Prelate, he may take occaſion to add, that the droll inventions of Hogarth have been of more ſervice to the cauſe of virtue than all * the ſermons of Tillotſon.

* Vide Eſſay 48.

ESSAY XI.

On STILE.

MR. Addiſon has moſt elegantly and juſtly obſerved, that "there is as much difference "between comprehending a thought clothed in "Cicero's language and that of an ordinary "writer, as between ſeeing an object by the light "of a taper or the light of the ſun." What is it then that diſtinguiſhes the ſtile of Cicero from that of an ordinary writer? or, to generalize the queſtion, What is it that conſtitutes beauty of Stile? This is a queſtion which I have never yet ſeen ſatisfactorily anſwered. Nevertheleſs, it muſt be acknowledged, that, amongſt the crowd of authors who have written "about it and about it," ſome have treated the ſubject with admirable ingenuity and acuteneſs; and if, after all, they have found it impoſſible fully to explain the true principles of taſte, they have given indiſputable proof at leaſt that it was not becauſe they were themſelves ſtrangers to their influence. But if there is no fixed and infallible ſtandard of truth, which is in itſelf fixed and immutable, how can it reaſonably be expected that a general ſtandard of beauty can ever be eſtabliſhed? For beauty is that quality

quality in objects whatever it be, the view or contemplation of which excites pleaſureable emotions; it is plain therefore that beauty is a relative, not a real, quality; and it muſt be as various as the different taſtes and ſentiments of all the different individuals of mankind; and with reſpect to that particular ſpecies of beauty which we are now conſidering, I mean beauty of language, there is perhaps as great a diverſity of ſentiment as upon any ſpecies of beauty whatever; yet that *taſte*, by which is meant our capacity for diſcerning beauty, is not wholly capricious and arbitrary, may be inferred from an appeal to certain facts, which incontrovertibly demonſtrate, that the productions of various writers for a long ſucceſſion of ages have actually excited very lively emotions of pleaſure in the minds of a great majority of thoſe who are capable of underſtanding them; and that a great proportion of this pleaſure ariſes from the beauty of the language in which they expreſſed their ideas evidently appears, from this conſideration alone, that the ſame ſentiments tranſlated into other language ceaſe to charm, or at leaſt to excite the ſame kind and degree of delight. Of this claſs of writers we may reckon Homer, Virgil, Demoſthenes, Cicero, Livy, Horace, Terence, and innumerable other Grecian and Roman authors, who are univerſally regarded as the grand models of literary excellence. Here then we ſeem to approach to ſomething which reſembles a ſtandard of beauty as it relates to Stile; for if there are thoſe who

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ſeem to derive no pleaſure from theſe exquiſite performances, or who even feel a degree of diſguſt or tœdium from the peruſal of them, the inſtances are ſo few, that we make not the leaſt ſcruple to neglect and deſpiſe their cenſures, regarding them as men whoſe minds are not framed for the perception of beauty, and who are totally incompetent to decide upon any queſtions relative to it. But, in reality, notwithſtanding this general coincidence of opinion, when we attempt to analyſe and compare our ideas, we quickly diſcover, that, while we uſe the ſame expreſſions, there often ſubſiſts a very conſiderable difference of ſentiment, and that every man has erected a ſtandard of taſte and beauty in his own mind to which he has a ſecret reference, though he adopts in common with others the ſame vague and indeterminate expreſſions of applauſe and cenſure. There are alſo a conſiderable number of moderns who are generally ſuppoſed to have written in the true ſpirit of the ancients. Some authors of our own nation in particular ſeem to poſſeſs all the graces of compoſition in an eminent degree: to theſe indeed an appeal cannot be made with equal confidence as to the ancients themſelves, as their literary excellence does not, in the nature of things, admit of the ſame medium of proof. Nevertheleſs, the names of ſome in every department of literature might eaſily be enumerated, whoſe writings will, I doubt not, charm through diſtant ages. Were I called upon to name the author who has moſt

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ſucceſsfully transfuſed the beauties of the ancients into his own performances, perhaps I ſhould fix upon Mr. Hume, and I imagine that his ſuperior merit in point of Stile will be as generally acknowledged as that of any writer of modern times: but I own, that when I attempt to trace the cauſes of thoſe emotions of admiration which I involuntarily feel, I am unable to aſcertain them with any degree of preciſion. Not long ſince, however, I recollect to have heard a certain modern hiſtory of Greece pronounced ſuperior in point of Stile to Hume's Hiſtory of England. This deciſion I ventured to controvert, affirming, in behalf of Mr. Hume, that his Stile was remarkably clear and perſpicuous; that it united both eaſe and dignity; that his diction was polite, his periods harmonious, and his metaphors moſt happily ſelected and applied; whereas the Stile of the Grecian hiſtorian, though free from groſs vulgariſms, and not deſtitute of harmony, was in other reſpects wretchedly defective. It is at the ſame time inflated and languid; it is inſufferably pompous and verboſe; and the continual effort he makes to reach a ſtately and elevated diction, is frequently ſo ſtrained, as to carry him to the very borders of burleſque: and the multiplicity of metaphors which he thinks it neceſſary to uſe, in order to raiſe and adorn his Stile, have as little pretenſion to real elegance as the coloured glaſs beads with which an Indian chieftain delights to decorate his perſon. It is very probable, that had "Durfey's poetry or Bunyan's proſe" been the

the ſubject of debate, we ſhould have found ourſelves equally at variance; and yet I doubt not but we were perfectly agreed in the general, that a good Stile conſiſted of "proper words in proper places: but the misfortune is, that it ſeems impoſſible to determine upon any fixed principles, what are proper words, and where the proper places. I once heard it obſerved, with no leſs juſtice than wit, that Swift's definition of a good Stile conveyed in it as little real meaning as if a teleſcope were defined to be an inſtrument conſiſting of proper glaſſes in proper places; and yet Swift knew as well as any man the difference between a good and a bad Stile, and if it was capable of being defined as capable of defining it.

Hume, I think, truly obſerves, that the firſt elegant proſe in our language was written by Swift. Mr. Melmoth indeed inclines to pay that compliment to Sir William Temple, but with little reaſon. Sir William Temple is certainly a name to which it is difficult not to be partial. He was at once a man of faſhion, a man of letters, and a man of buſineſs; and in each of theſe different characters he excelled. But if we conſider him merely as a model of elegant compoſition, he is by no means entitled to the encomiums of ſo able a critic as Mr. Melmoth. In fact, I ſuſpect that we are in regard to this point a little impoſed upon, and that our judgments are inſenſibly influenced and biaſſed by certain circumſtances to which we do not immediately advert. In reading the works of

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Sir William Temple, we plainly perceive that he was a man perfectly converſant with the great world. We know that he was a man of the politeſt manners and addreſs, and his mode of writing is free, eaſy, and amuſing, without any tincture of affectation or pedantry; ſo that we eaſily perſuade ourſelves that his Stile is graceful; and his ſoleciſms, his uncouth periods, and aukward phraſes, paſs for the caſual ſlips of an elegant but careleſs writer. I have at this moment before me a volume of Sir William Temple's works, containing a variety of tracts, any one of which will furniſh abundant proofs of the juſtice of this remark. I ſhall ſelect a few inſtances from his conſolatory epiſtle to the Counteſs of Eſſex upon the loſs of her only daughter. After making ſome apologies for not anſwering at a more early period a letter he had received from her Ladyſhip, he adds, "Your Ladyſhip at leaſt has had the "advantage of being thereby excuſed ſome time "from this trouble, which I could no longer for-"bear upon the ſenſible wounds that have ſo often "of late been given your friends here by ſuch "deſperate expreſſions in ſeveral of your letters," &c. To ſay nothing of the inelegant conſtruction of the whole ſentence, What ſhould we now think of a writer who ſhould talk of ſenſible wounds given by deſperate expreſſions? "God "Almighty gave you all the bleſſings of life, and "you ſet your heart wholly upon one, and deſpiſe "and undervalue all the reſt; is this his fault or "yours?"

yours?" The *fault of God* is a mode of ſpeech which the delicacy, if not the devotion, of modern critics would not eaſily pardon. "A friend "makes me a feaſt, and ſets all before me that his "care or kindneſs could provide; but I ſet my heart "upon one diſh alone, and if that happen to be "thrown down, I ſcorn all the reſt; and though he "ſends for another of the ſame, yet I riſe from the "table in a rage, and ſay, my friend is my enemy, "and has done me the greateſt wrong in the world. "Have I reaſon, Madam, or good grace, in what I "do?" This illuſtration has little to boaſt of in point of juſtneſs of thought; and it is very defective in dignity and decorum; particularly in the circumſtance of ſending for *another diſh of the ſame*, as he phraſes it; and the vulgarity of the language perfectly accords with the groſſneſs of the ideas. Again: "Paſſions are the ſtings "without which they ſay no honey is made; "yet I think all ſorts of men have ever agreed they "ought to be our ſervants, and not our maſters; to "give us ſome agitation for entertainment or ex-"erciſe, but never to throw reaſon out of its ſeat;" ſo that it ſeems our paſſions may at once be compared and bear an equal reſemblance to "bees, ſervants, and horſes." This reminds one of the happy ductility of Polonius, who allows that the ſame cloud is very like an ouzle, very like a camel, and very like a whale. Once more: "How "has my Lord of Eſſex deſerved, that you ſhould "go about to loſe him a wife he loves with ſo much "paſſion, and, which is more, with ſo much reaſon;

" ſo great an honour and ſupport to his family, ſo
" great a hope to his fortune, and comfort to his
" life?" " To go about to loſe my Lord of Eſſex
" a wife," is a ſpecies of phraſeology ſo quaint and comic, that one would ſuppoſe her Ladyſhip in the midſt of her affliction could not but *ſmile in weeping*. Some parts of this epiſtle, however, are very beautifully written; and one paſſage in particular is ſo tender as well as elegant, that I cannot forbear to tranſcribe it, though foreign to my preſent purpoſe. " After all, Madam, I think
" your loſs ſo great, that would all the paſſionate
" complaints, all the anguiſh of your heart, do any
" thing to retrieve it; could tears water the lovely
" plant, ſo as to make it grow again after once it
" is cut down; would ſighs furniſh new breath, or
" could it draw life and ſpirits from the waſting of
" yours; I am ſure your friends would be ſo far from
" accuſing your paſſion, that they would encourage
" it as much, and ſhare it as deeply, as they could;
" but alas! the eternal laws of the creation extin-
" guiſh all ſuch hopes," &c. In general, I think, it may be laid down as a certain maxim, that to attain to an high degree of excellence in Style, requires not only great taſte but real genius. The writers in our own language moſt celebrated for Style, are Hume, Robertſon, Gibbon, Johnſon, Swift, Addiſon, and Bolingbroke; all of them men of undoubted genius as well as taſte. There is, indeed, another ſet of writers, who muſt be allowed to poſſeſs great merit, who, with a

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conſiderable though inferior ſhare of genius, combine an equal or ſuperior degree of taſte; and their Style is accordingly equal in elegance, but inferior in energy and felicity of expreſſion. Of this claſs are Beattie, Blair, Cheſterfield, Melmoth, Jenyns, Walpole, *&c.* I do not however deny that there are ſome writers, who, without a ſpark of genius, by means of a good ear, and a certain degree of refinement, which falls ſhort of a juſt and correct taſte, have attained to a poliſhed and harmonious Style of compoſition, but then it is feeble, languid, and verboſe; and though often affectedly pompous, and crowded with ornament, equally deſtitute of the "*callida juncturа*" and the "*curioſa felicitas.*"

Upon the whole we may venture to conclude, that beauty of Style, or the art of compoſition, depending upon a certain occult quality in language, or rather a certain inexplicable delicacy of perception, is not to be acquired by rules. Not that rules are entirely uſeleſs.

An author who writes by rule, as has been obſerved, will undoubtedly avoid groſs errors; but he cannot by the mere obſervance of rules attain to poſitive beauties. Nothing ſhort of true original genius, improved and cultivated by a correct taſte, can ever hope ſucceſsfully to attempt that bold and glowing Style of compoſition which we ſo much admire in the productions of the great maſters of eloquence. The "thoughts that breathe, and words that burn," do not fall to the lot of ordinary writers;

and it ſhows a great defect of judgment whenever they aſpire to them. Let not ſuch perſons vainly pretend to ſnatch thoſe graces which are beyond the reach of art. "What then!" it may be ſaid, "are men of moderate talents to ſit down in deſpair of ever being able to acquire the faculty of expreſſing their thoughts with eaſe, propriety, and elegance?" By no means. We have innumerable examples of ſuch as, by care and attention alone, have in this reſpect excelled many far ſuperior to themſelves in natural underſtanding and genius, but who unhappily affected to deſpiſe and depreciate this ſtudy, as paying that regard to words which is due only to things. All that I contend for is this, that though a Style which merits approbation may be acquired by diligence, a Style which commands admiration cannot. I therefore think that men who have little or no pretenſion to genius, ſhould not aſpire to the higher graces of compoſition; for by ſo doing they often make themſelves ridiculous; when by aiming at nothing more than purity, perſpicuity, and ſimplicity, they might with much leſs effort appear in a light much more reſpectable. An acquaintance with the rules of compoſition is no doubt of conſiderable ſervice; but I believe the beſt method of acquiring a taſte for the beauties of Style and language, is by an attentive and repeated peruſal of the beſt authors, by a careful compariſon of the productions of different writers, and by imitating in our own performances the Style and

and manner of thoſe admired maſters of compoſition, ſo far as they are properly imitable by thoſe who do not poſſeſs their ſuperiority of genius.

I think experience fully evinces, that it is very poſſible for a man to poſſeſs an elegant and claſſical taſte with reſpect to the beauties of Style and compoſition in one language, and to be utterly deſtitute of it in another. One can ſcarcely imagine, that if Ogilby, Hobbes, and Chapman, had not derived a ſenſible pleaſure from the poems of Homer, or Milbourne and Trapp from thoſe of Virgil, that they would have engaged in the laborious work of tranſlating thoſe divine authors; and it is well known that a very general taſte for the beauties of the ancients prevailed long before the moderns had learned to expreſs their ideas in their vernacular languages with grace or propriety; and indeed the languages themſelves were moſt unjuſtly held in contempt, as little better than barbarous jargon, and ſuppoſed to be wholly undeſerving of attention, and incapable of improvement. This prejudice is however greatly upon the decline; and it is generally allowed that the Engliſh language in particular may juſtly pretend to a rivality with the admired languages of antiquity. I make no ſcruple at leaſt to place it upon a level with the Roman; and perhaps that very circumſtance which is ſuppoſed by many to give to the Greek language ſo decided a ſuperiority, I mean that wonderful copiouſneſs which it derives from its variety of dialects, ſhould rather be conſidered as a real diſad-

vantage: and I believe thoſe who are moſt inclined to admire and magnify this uncommon property of the Grecian tongue, would think the Engliſh language little improved by blending it with our provincial dialects. Spenſer has made ſome attempts of this kind, with a degree of ſucceſs which will ſcarcely encourage others to follow the example. In fact, the Engliſh language is ſufficiently copious to expreſs all our ideas with great force and elegance, and with a degree of accuracy and preciſion to which the Latin tongue is a ſtranger. Its genius ſeems to reſemble that of the people by whom it is ſpoken. The great characteriſtics of it are ſtrength and energy, but it is very ſuſceptible of the gentler graces. There is a ſoftneſs, ſweetneſs, and delicacy of Style to which ſeveral of our favourite writers, both in poetry and proſe, have attained, which ſufficiently reſcue it from the reproach of harſhneſs or diſſonance. There is, moreover, a boldneſs and freedom in the idiom of our language which admits of the adoption of new terms, and new combinations of words, in a degree which perhaps no other language is capable of. The admirable powers and properties of the Engliſh language, as diſplayed in the whole extent of Verſification, might alſo with propriety be mentioned in this general ſketch of its excellencies; but this I reſerve for the ſubject of a diſtinct Eſſay.

ESSAY XII.

Remarks on ENGLISH VERSIFICATION.

VERSIFICATION may properly be conſidered as the ſtyle of poetry, or the art of compoſition in metre; and though the taſte or mental perception of beauty or deformity is in this caſe affected by ſtill more lively emotions of diſguſt or admiration than proſe has power to excite, the ultimate cauſes of thoſe emotions are enveloped in exactly the ſame degree of darkneſs and obſcurity. It is indeed perhaps ſomewhat more eaſy to lay down rules or reaſons by which we are ſuppoſed to be influenced in forming our judgments reſpecting the beauty of ſtyle in poetry than in proſe: but if we pretend to advance a ſingle ſtep farther, we have only the mortification to diſcover, that the rules which the moſt ſagacious critics have laboured to eſtabliſh, reſolve themſelves into this one fundamental and arbitrary dictate of nature, *Such is our pleaſure.* For inſtance, the following canons of criticiſm may, for aught I know, be as judicious, and of as much real utility, as any belonging to the Code. 1ſt, That Verſification, in order to pleaſe, muſt be ſmooth and harmonious, exact without ſtiffneſs, and eaſy without neg-

gligence. 2dly, That uniformity ſhould be blended with variety; and, while the firſt is obſerved in adhering to the ſame preciſe number of poetical feet in each verſe or ſtanza, the latter ſhould be ſtudied in the pauſes, cadences, and accents. 3dly, That the ſound ſhould, as far as poſſible, be made to coincide with the ſenſe, from which coincidence ariſes what is called imitative harmony; and, in general, that the emotion excited by the tone of the verſe ſhould accord with the emotion excited by the ſentiment expreſſed, or the object deſcribed. It were not difficult to add a multitude of rules of the ſame kind, and to exemplify the rules by an induction of particular paſſages, and to expatiate very learnedly upon each; or it were equally eaſy to quote paſſages without end, and to point out beauties without number, and to ſupport our opinion by a reference to the ſame rules, which would in that caſe be converted into reaſons. By theſe ingenious contrivances, accompanied with a peculiar air of importance and ſelf-complacency, Lord Kaims has acquired, with many, the reputation of a profound critic; but I never could perceive for my own part that any great addition was made to real knowledge by this ſort of information; though I muſt in juſtice to his Lordſhip acknowledge, that in his elaborate work are occaſionally interſperſed many acute and ſagacious obſervations. With regard to the few reflections I have to offer, I chuſe to make my appeal rather to the taſte than the reaſon of the reader, becauſe theſe

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are ſubjects which ſeem to me properly to come within the juriſdiction of taſte; for either the rules themſelves are liable to ſuſpicion, as not ſufficiently confirmed by fact and experience, or if they are univerſally received as true, it is not the leſs difficult to demonſtrate that they have their origin and foundation in reaſon. Why do we prefer, for inſtance, the imitations of Dr. Donne's Satires by Pope to the originals? becauſe it may be ſaid they are far more muſical and harmonious. But why do we prefer the muſical and harmonious Verſification of the former, to the harſh and rugged numbers of the latter? Here we are at a ſtand, and the preference reſolves itſelf into a mere matter of taſte, without the ſhadow of a reaſon on which to ground that preference. Is it not then better, without making an empty parade of knowledge which we do not really poſſeſs, at once to confeſs our ignorance and inability to account for thoſe ſenſations of pleaſure which we derive from theſe ſources, than vainly to attempt to reduce thoſe feelings to the dominion of reaſon, which refuſe to acknowledge any authority but that of taſte.

I do not, however, pretend to aſſert, that becauſe the end of poetry is to pleaſe, and becauſe it is by an appeal to taſte, and not to reaſon, that the queſtion muſt be decided, whether that end is actually attained; I ſay, I do not therefore aſſert, that all rules of poetical compoſition are to be decried as impertinent or uſeleſs; this would be running into a very abſurd extreme.

treme. As there is a certain degree of uniformity in our mental feelings and perceptions, there certainly is a foundation for that uniformity; and it is both entertaining and inſtructive, by any fair proceſs of induction, to point out the immediate, though we cannot trace the ultimate, cauſes of thoſe uniform emotions of diſguſt or admiration, which is in effect to point out the means of avoiding or exciting them; or, in other words, it is to eſtabliſh certain fixed rules of compoſition upon the authority of experience: but what I diſlike is, the pedantry of appealing to ſpeculative principles in oppoſition to the deciſions of taſte; and what I deſpiſe is, the ridiculous vanity of attempting to demonſtrate by argument, that men ought to admire, when experience proves that no one does or can admire; and, on the other hand, that men are in the wrong to be pleaſed, when experience proves that it is impoſſible to avoid it. In a word, of all kinds of literary affectation, that which is moſt diſguſting is, the affectation of judging in matters of taſte by rule, and not by feeling; and this appears to me the fundamental defect of the work to which I have before alluded; I mean the Elements of Criticiſm. Lord Kaims was leſs remarkable for delicacy of taſte than acuteneſs of underſtanding; and he evidently ſeems to have thought it much below the dignity of a critic to embrace any opinion even in a mere matter of taſte which was not ſupported by ſome rule. Where the rule was not already eſtabliſhed, there-

fore,

fore, he was obliged to have recourſe to his invention, which did not always ſupply him with ſuch as were of the moſt ſatisfactory kind; and he ſeems through the whole of his elaborate work to entertain much too high an idea of the importance of thoſe rules; for he ſeems to conſider them as founded in reaſon, and as laws by which taſte ought to be regulated, whereas they are properly founded in taſte, and the moſt judicious and beſt eſtabliſhed rules are really nothing more than the different principles by which experience ſhows that the deciſions of taſte are governed. But "*à priori*" it is impoſſible to prove, by any ſpeculative reaſoning, that thoſe principles poſſeſs more of innate propriety than the oppoſite ones: for inſtance, it is a rule that the unity of action in an Epic poem ought to be preſerved; and no one can read the Iliad and the Orlando Furioſo without being ſenſible of the propriety of it; but if any one ſhould aſk the reaſon upon which this rule is founded, we are compelled to confeſs that it reſolves itſelf entirely into a matter of taſte. We might indeed retreat a ſtep backward, and anſwer, that the reaſon is, becauſe the attention ought not to be divided; but the queſtion immediately recurs, "Why ought not the attention to be divided?" And to this what can be replied, but that it is found by experience to be unpleaſant, and to occaſion wearineſs and diſguſt.

Having thus ſtated my ideas on the ſubject of ſpeculative and theoretical criticiſm, I proceed to conſider what it is that properly conſtitutes

conſtitutes the difference between verſe and proſe. Verſe, I think, may be defined as a ſpecies of compoſition, in which the arrangement of words is ſubject to certain preciſe rules; and the ear, as Lord Kaims obſerves, muſt be appealed to, as the proper judge for deciding upon the effects produced by theſe rules. By what mark then does the ear diſtinguiſh verſe from proſe? The proper and ſatisfactory anſwer, according to his Lordſhip, is, that "theſe make different impreſſions upon every one who hath an ear." "This advances us," ſays he, "one ſtep in our enquiry." Now I own I cannot perceive that the ſmalleſt advance is made in the enquiry by this anſwer. Verſe and proſe are allowed to be different kinds of compoſition diſtinguiſhable by the ear. The queſtion is, By what criterion the ear aſcertains the diſtinction between them; and we are told it is by the different impreſſions made upon it. But the queſtion itſelf implies, that different impreſſions are made upon that organ; and it is the nature of this difference only that needs to be explained: but, in anſwer to the enquiry reſpecting that point, we are gravely informed, that we have advanced one ſtep in our enquiry, by being aſſured that their certainly is a difference. This is one inſtance out of a thouſand which might be adduced of the pompous inanity of Lord Kaims's mode of writing; his Lordſhip's critical talents, however, have been held in ſuch high and general eſtimation, that I know not well to whom I can appeal as an authority

authority upon this occaſion, in order to corroborate my own ſentiments, excepting the celebrated Abbé Winckleman; and he indeed ſpeaks in much more contemptuous terms than I chooſe to adopt of the whole performance. The proper anſwer to the queſtion ſeems to be, that the ear diſtinguiſhes verſe from proſe by its uniformity; for though it may be capable of conſiderable variety in ſome reſpects, yet in others, as it is ſubject to fixed rules, it muſt be eaſily diſtinguiſhable by the regular recurrence of thoſe peculiarities of ſound which muſt reſult from their operation: for I think none of the various modes of Verſification in uſe amongſt us is ſo looſe and irregular, as not to be very diſtinguiſhable from proſe according to this criterion, even by an indifferent ear. In ſhort, the eſſential difference between verſe and proſe conſiſts in the meaſure; for if we admit ſuch performances as Telemaque or Fingal into the claſs of poems, how is it poſſible to draw any preciſe line between theſe two ſpecies of compoſition?

In order to preſerve ſome degree of method in the remaining part of this Eſſay, I ſhall firſt offer ſome remarks upon the different kinds of Verſification of which our language and poetry are ſuſceptible; and, 2dly, I ſhall add a few reflections reſpecting the merit or demerit of the moſt celebrated Engliſh poets as to this fundamental excellence of that divine art. Of all the different kinds of verſe known in Engliſh

liſh poetry, *blank verſe* is undoubtedly entitled to be firſt mentioned as firſt in dignity and importance. Voltaire has obſerved, that blank verſe is of ſo looſe a texture, that it coſts nothing but the trouble of writing; upon which account he ſeems to intend to repreſent it as ſcarcely worth the trouble of reading, or as far inferior at leaſt to French heroic verſe, which conſiſting of four regular anapeſts, and admitting little or no variation of pauſes, accents, or arrangement, is conſequently of much more difficult conſtruction; but this difficulty ſurmounted, he pretends, is the ſource of great delight to every reader of taſte; a ſtrange criterion, indeed, by which to judge of the comparative merit of theſe two different kinds of Verſification. If that mode of compoſition, which is moſt difficult in itſelf, be upon that account moſt pleaſing, our greateſt poets ought no doubt to have retired into "ſome peaceful province of acroſtic land."

"There they might wings diſplay, and altars raiſe,
"And torture one poor word ten thouſand ways."

It is certainly true that blank verſe is very eaſy to write; but for this reaſon it is as certain, that it is the more difficult to excel in writing it. Such blank verſe as Monſ. de Voltaire himſelf has given us a ſpecimen of is, no doubt, to do him juſtice, truly contemptible: but if Monſ. de Voltaire had been competently qualified to criticize upon Engliſh poetry, he would have known that the

blank

blank verſe of Milton, and Shakeſpeare is, of all the various meaſures practiſed among us, that which is moſt difficult of imitation. Blank verſe has ſo near an affinity to proſe, that it requires the moſt conſummate ſkill and judgment in the arrangement of the periods, as well as the utmoſt force and elevation of language to preſerve the diſtinction between them. But when the requiſite proportion of ſkill and genius is exerted, and that degree of perfection attained, which genius, conducted by application, never fails to reach, the wonderful effects of this ſpecies of poetical compoſition become fully apparent; and we admire the Verſification of the "Paradiſe Loſt," not becauſe Milton has ſurmounted great difficulties, for this alone is a very weak foundation for applauſe, but becauſe he has attained to poſitive beauties of the moſt exquiſite kind. Doubtleſs, that egregious blockhead who took the trouble to tranſlate the Iliad, and in each of the twenty-four books omitted ſome one letter of the alphabet, ſurmounted a difficulty of great magnitude; but is he therefore the ſubject of our admiration or deriſion? The truth is, that the conqueſt of difficulties is never a ſource of pleaſure, at leaſt to men of refinement, except ſome purpoſe either of uſe or beauty is accompliſhed by it; but, when any ſuch purpoſe is effected, the emotion of wonder excited by the removal of the difficulty, agreeably to the laws of aſſociation, blends itſelf with the emotion of eſteem or admiration excited by the contempla-

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tion of utility or beauty; and the complex emotion acquires by this conjunction a high degree of force and vigour. Thus our admiration of the Miltonic Verſification, which is in itſelf exquiſitely beautiful, is very much heightened by our knowledge of the extreme difficulty of ſucceeding in that meaſure; but the difficulty of writing French heroic verſe does not at all induce us to admire the Verſification of the Henriade, which is in itſelf deſtitute of beauty, being tame, languid, and monotonous. But if it ſhould now be aſked, What are thoſe exquiſite beauties of which blank verſe is ſuſceptible, and for which it is ſo much celebrated, I think we may reply in a few words, that they are majeſty, melody, and variety. I ſhould far exceed the limits of my paper, were I to pretend to enlarge upon theſe heads. A hint or two is all that an eſſayiſt, who attempts ſlight ſketches only, and leaves to more elaborate artiſts the praiſe of finiſhed productions, can be expected to offer. The firſt characteriſtic of blank verſe then, as it appears in the productions of Milton and Shakeſpeare, is "majeſty." I do not think that even the hexameter of the ancients poſſeſſes this property in an equal degree. The hexameter is no doubt a very noble poetical meaſure, but it does not ſeem capable of that long continued pomp of ſound of which we have ſo many examples in our great poets. There are hexameter verſes which will be found ſuperior perhaps to any ſingle lines or periods in the Paradiſe

Paradiſe Loſt; but when twenty or thirty verſes are repeated ſucceſſively, the ſuperiority of blank verſe becomes very apparent. I know not any equal number of hexameters which can be placed in competition with the following verſes from Milton:

—— the great Creator from his work
Deſiſting, tho' unweary'd, up return'd;
Up to the heav'n of heav'ns his high abode,
Thence to behold this new-created world,
Th' addition of his empire, how it ſhew'd
In proſpect from his throne; how good, how fair,
Anſwering his great idea. Up he rode,
Follow'd with acclamations, and the ſound
Symphonious, of ten thouſand harps that tun'd
Angelic harmonies. The earth, the air,
Reſounded; thou remember'ſt, for thou heard'ſt;
The heav'ns and all the conſtellations rung;
The planets in their ſtations liſt'ning ſtood,
While the bright pomp aſcended jubilant.
Open, ye everlaſting gates, they ſung;
Open, ye heav'ns, your living doors, let in
The great Creator, from his work return'd
Magnificent; his ſix days work, a world.

The monotonous cloſe of the hexameter, though it may be diſguiſed in a great meaſure for a few lines, by the ſurpriſing variety it is capable of in other reſpects, cannot fail to ſtrike, and in ſome degree to diſguſt, the ear upon frequent repetition; and, in the recital of long paſſages, to cauſe very unſeaſonable and unpleaſant interruptions to what Pope ſtiles "the long reſounding

"march and energy divine." To compare blank verſe with our own, or with the French heroic couplet, in this reſpect were ſuperfluous. But, 2dly, blank verſe, *i. e.* the blank verſe of Milton and Shakeſpeare, is no leſs remarkable for its melody than its majeſty! This property of blank verſe ariſes from the unbounded liberty the poet enjoys of varying his pauſes, and extending his periods, ſo as to produce the utmoſt fulneſs and harmony of cadence: and in this reſpect it has a manifeſt advantage over the heroic couplet as well as the hexameter. It would be difficult to find any equal number of hexameters or couplets, ſo melodious or grateful to the ear, as the paſſage juſt quoted from Milton. It indeed poſſeſſes the three great characteriſtics of that ſpecies of verſe, majeſty, melody, and variety, in a high degree of perfection. Upon the laſt of thoſe characteriſtics, it is very unneceſſary to expatiate. As oppoſed to the hexameter meaſure and the heroic couplet, its variety evidently ariſes from its happy exemption from the neceſſity of an uniform cloſe: and, as to myſelf, I muſt acknowledge, that however ſuperior the hexameter may be to the heroic couplet in other reſpects, the perpetual recurrence of the dactyl and ſpondee is more fatiguing to my ear than what Dryden calls the *tinkle* in the cloſe of the couplet. The couplet, however, though confeſſedly inferior to hexameter, as well as blank verſe, is far from being deſtitute of force or beauty: it is capable of ſome degree of variety in its accents,

cents, and very great diverſity in its pauſes: it is lively, vigorous, and animated, and particularly adapted to gay and airy ſubjects, of which "the Rape of the Lock" is a deciſive proof. It ſeems not to admit of any conſiderable inverſion of language; but Dryden, in numerous inſtances, has very happily indulged himſelf in the liberty of running one couplet into another, by which means he has added wonderfully to the ſpirit, freedom, and energy of his verſe. Lord Kaims indeed aſſerts, that every couplet ought to finiſh with ſome cloſe in the ſenſe, for which he fails not as uſual to aſſign a reaſon. "Every couplet," ſays his Lordſhip, "muſt of courſe conclude with a muſical "pauſe; and if it is accompanied by a pauſe in the "ſenſe, the coincidence gratifies at the ſame time "the ear and underſtanding." This reaſoning is juſt if applied to a ſingle couplet; but ſurely it is not neceſſary to have our ears purged by an Archangel with *euphraſy and rue*, to be ſenſible how much the petty pleaſure ariſing from ſuch coincidence is overbalanced by the additional delight we derive from that variety and animation which are the reſult of occaſional deviations from this rule. As a complete confutation of all ſuch criticiſms, I would confidently oppoſe the initial paragraph of Dryden's well-known poem of the Hind and Panther.

A milk-white Hind, immortal and unchang'd,
Fed on the lawns, or on the foreſt rang'd;
Without unſpotted, innocent within,
She fear'd no danger, for ſhe knew no ſin;

Yet had ſhe oft been chas'd with horns and hounds,
And Scythian ſhafts; and many winged wounds
Aim'd at her heart; was often forc'd to fly,
And doom'd to death, tho' fated not to die.

But Lord Kaims is ſo faſtidious a critic, that he will not allow the ſlighteſt muſical pauſe to intervene between an adjective and ſubſtantive, a ſubſtantive and verb, or a verb and adverb. Who would have imagined that the following lines of Pope were faulty:

In theſe deep ſolitudes and awful cells,
Where heav'nly-penſive contemplation dwells,
And ever-muſing melancholy reigns——

They always, however, appeared to Lord Kaims exceptionable, on account of the pauſe interjected between the verb and conſequent ſubſtantive; and his Lordſhip, after a great deal of deep thinking, was at laſt fortunate enough, as he informs us, to diſcover a reaſon in ſupport of his taſte. The caſe is ſtated by his Lordſhip with all the accuracy and formality of the profeſſion to which he belonged. "Between the active ſubſtantive and "the verb, placed in their natural order, there "is no difficulty of interjecting a pauſe, becauſe "an active being is not always in motion, and "therefore it is eaſily ſeparable in idea from its "action: but when by inverſion the verb is "placed firſt, is it *lawful* to ſeparate it by a "pauſe from the active ſubſtantive?" To this curious queſtion his Lordſhip anſwers poſitively, "No, becauſe an action is not in idea ſeparable "from

" from the agent, more than a quality from the " ſubject to which it appertains." If Lord Kaims had not ſo expreſsly affirmed the contrary, I own I ſhould have ſuſpected that his Lordſhip's feelings on this as on other occaſions had complaiſantly accommodated themſelves to the rule diſcovered, or rather had yielded implicit obedience to the *law* promulgated by his Lordſhip.

I am of opinion that Pope has weakened the general effect of his poetry very conſiderably, by adhering too cloſely to the rule ſpecified by Lord Kaims, reſpecting the propriety of concluding every couplet by a pauſe in the ſenſe as well as in the muſic. It has given his Verſification an air of tameneſs and uniformity, and in this as well as other characteriſtics of poetic genius, I cannot but regard him as very inferior to Dryden, though he perhaps more than compenſates for this inferiority by the " *limæ labor*," which appears ſo conſpicuous throughout all his works. Dryden was a writer to the laſt degree negligent and incorrect; he was alſo often unhappy in the choice of his ſubjects, and his ſentiments upon the ſubjects which he *has* choſen are frequently very exceptionable, and ſometimes very abſurd. Pope was, as an elegant critic juſtly ſtiles him, the Poet of Reaſon; and, in peruſing his productions, the underſtanding is improved, while the imagination is delighted. But ſtill it muſt be allowed, that the ſacred mantle which deſcended from Shakeſpeare to Milton, and which Dryden ſometimes wore with dignity, hung

looſe upon Pope, "like a giant's robe upon a dwarfiſh thief." I ſhall take the liberty of digreſſing a moment to give a ſtriking inſtance of this. In the celebrated harangue of Othello before the Venetian Senate, he ſpeaks, amongſt other particulars, of what he calls his Travel's Hiſtory,

——— "Of antres vaſt, and deſerts idle,
"Rough quarries, rocks, and hills, whoſe heads touch
"heav'n."

Pope, in his edition of Shakeſpeare, for "idle," ſubſtitutes "wilde." Warburton himſelf could have done no worſe. The epithet idle is truly Shakeſperian; but it was beyond the reach of Pope. Milton, indeed, has uſed it with the ſame happy boldneſs in one of his ſonnets, in which he mournfully complains that his eyes "their ſeeing had forgot."

Nor to their idle orbs doth light appear,
Or ſun, or moon, or ſtars, throughout the year,
Or man or woman.

Next to blank verſe and the heroic couplet, the elegiac ſtanza ſeems to poſſeſs the greateſt ſhare of importance and popularity: it has a kind of plaintive flow, which renders it peculiarly ſuitable to tender and melancholy ſubjects. Hammond and Shenſtone, and, above all, Gray, have been particularly ſucceſsful in this ſpecies of Verſification. In the laſt century this ſtanza was very erroneouſly conſidered as ſuperior in dignity to the heroic couplet; and it was accordingly adopted by Sir William Davenant in his Epic poem of GONDIBERT,

DIBERT, and by Dryden in his "Annus Mirabilis," and in other compoſitions of the ſame caſt. The Spenſerian ſtanza muſt be allowed to exhibit a certain air of ſtatelineſs, and it is not deficient in force or harmony; but it ſoon palls upon the ear by its uniformity. There ſeems to be a ſort of analogy, remote and ſomewhat fanciful indeed, between the ſtanza of Spenſer and the ſubject of his poem, ſufficient however to prevent our regretting the choice he has made. A kind of ſtiff, formal, and obſolete magnificence ſeems to predominate in both. This difficult ſtanza has been very happily revived by ſome modern writers, particularly by Thomſon in his Caſtle of Indolence, and by Dr. Beattie in the firſt book of the Minſtrel.

It is rather ſingular, that the French heroic couplet, conſiſting of four anapeſts, ſhould never be uſed amongſt us but on ſubjects of mirth and gaiety, and with the utmoſt propriety. What can be deemed, for inſtance, more perfect in its kind than the Verſification of the Bath Guide? but ſurely no admirer of that exquiſite *jeu d'eſprit* will deny that the firſt couplet of the Henriade

Je chante ce héros qui regna ſur la France,
Et par droit de conquête, et par droit de naiſſance.

is as little adapted to the majeſty of the Epopeia as

"But what with my Nivernois hat can compare,
My bag wig, and lac'd ruffles, and black ſolitaire?"

The regular Pindarics of Gray and Collins are entitled to a very high degree of applauſe; and not-

withſtanding the ſeverity of Dr. Johnſon's criticiſm, I acknowledge I have read many irregular efforts of the Pindaric muſe with great pleaſure. Excluſive of Dryden's Immortal Ode, which far tranſcends all praiſe, the Lycidas of Milton, Lord Lyttleton's Monody, Shaw's Ode to the Nightingale, and many other productions might be mentioned, which ſufficiently demonſtrate that regularity of metre is not eſſential to poetic excellence. I cannot pretend to enumerate all the different kinds of Verſification in uſe amongſt us. Of thoſe which I have not ſpecified, perhaps the Hudibraſtic couplet is moſt valuable, as admirably calculated for burleſque poetry. Prior, in his Alma, has ſhown himſelf ſcarcely inferior to Butler in his dextrous management of it.

According to the plan propoſed, I am now to make ſome obſervations upon the merit or demerit of our moſt celebrated poets in point of Verſification; but, on reviſing what I have written, I find I have in a great meaſure anticipated my own intention; and the length of this Eſſay is already ſuch as to make it neceſſary to draw to a concluſion. Of the Verſification of Shakeſpeare I have declared my ſentiments at large in a former Eſſay. Of Milton, Dryden, and Pope, I have taken occaſion to ſpeak in the courſe of the preſent. To the laſt perhaps ſome may think I have ſcarcely done juſtice. Pope has often been ſtiled the beſt verſifier in the Engliſh language. If by the beſt is only meant the

the moſt poliſhed and correct verſifier, I am ready to acquieſce in the panegyric; but if his mode of Verſification is ſtiled the beſt, as affording the higheſt degree of delight, I can by no means allow it to be true. In this reſpect Shakeſpeare, Milton, and Dryden, all rank much above him. Pope does not ſufficiently conceal his art; he wants ſimplicity. The flow of his verſe, though very harmonious, is ſeldom tender or pathetic, and ſtill leſs frequently lofty and majeſtic; in his tranſlation of the Iliad, however, he riſes to very ſublime heights. It is a wonderful performance, far ſuperior, no doubt, to the Eneid of Dryden, or probably to any other tranſlation that ever appeared in the world. I have in my poſſeſſion, and I preſerve it as a curioſity, the vile doggrel tranſlation of Hobbes. For the amuſement of thoſe who may not have met with it, I ſhall tranſcribe a few parallel paſſages from both, that the pleaſure of contraſt may be enjoyed in perfection, and that the reader may contemplate at once the extremes of poetic elegance and meanneſs.

Bk I. Ὡς ἔφαθ' ὑχόμενος τῷ δ' ἐκλυε Φοῖβος Ἀπόλλων, &c.

His * prayer was granted by the Deity,
Who with his ſilver bow and arrows keen
Deſcended from Olympus ſilently
In likeneſs of the ſable night unſeen.
His bow and quiver both behind him hang;
The arrows chink as often as he jogs,
And as he ſhot, the bow was heard to twang, &c.

HOBBES.

* Chryſes.

Thus

Thus Chryſes pray'd; the favouring pow'r attends,
And from Olympus' lofty tops deſcends.
Bent was his bow the Grecian hearts to wound;
Fierce as he mov'd, his ſilver ſhafts reſound,
Breathing revenge; a ſudden night he ſpread,
And gloomy darkneſs roll'd around his head.
The fleet in view, he twang'd his deadly bow, &c.
POPE.

Id. Πατροκλος δε φιλω επεπειθεθ' εταιρω, &c. &c.
This ſaid, Patroclus led Briſeis forth,
And to Atrides' meſſengers her gave.
She with them went, tho' much againſt her heart.
Achilles from his friends went off and pray'd,
And ſitting with his face to th' ſea apart,
Weeping unto his mother, Thetis ſaid, &c.
HOBBES.

Patroclus now th' unwilling beauty brought;
She in ſoft ſorrows and in penſive thought
Paſt ſilent as the heralds held her hand,
And oft look'd back, ſlow moving o'er the ſtrand.
Not ſo his loſs the fierce Achilles bore,
But ſad, retiring to the ſounding ſhore,
O'er the wild margin of the deep he hung,
That kindred deep from whence his mother ſprung;
There bath'd in tears of anger and diſdain,
Thus loud lamented to the ſtormy main. POPE.

Id. Ημος δ' ηελιος κατεδυ, και επι κνιφας ηλθε, &c. &c.
But when the ſun had borne away his light,
Upon the ſands they laid them down to ſleep;
And when again Aurora came in ſight,
Again they launch their ſhip into the deep.
A good fore-wind Apollo with them ſent;
Then with her breaſt the ſhip the water tore,
Which by her down on both ſides roaring went,
And ſoon arrived at the Trojan ſhore. HOBBES.

'Twas night; the chiefs beſide their veſſel lie,
Till roſy morn had purpled o'er the ſky;

Then

Then launch and hoiſt the maſt: indulgent gales,
Supply'd by Phœbus, fill the ſwelling ſails.
The milk-white canvas bellying as they blow
The parted ocean foams, and roars below;
Above the bounding billows ſwift they flew,
Till now the Grecian camp appear'd in view. POPE.

The principal remaining poets, of whom it is neceſſary for me to take ſome notice, are, I think, Cowley, Waller, Thomſon, and Young. Had Cowley's judgment borne any proportion to his genius, he would unqueſtionably have been entitled to a very high rank in the public eſtimation, which indeed, while the public judgment was as yet immature, he actually enjoyed. In the preſent improved ſtate of Verſification, we have few productions of the Engliſh muſe more ſoft, more gay, more airy, than his Anacreontics, his Acmé and Septimius, or his Chronicle. On the other hand, in the pathetic and plaintive ſtile, few pieces exhibit a more mournful flow of numbers than his elegy on Harvey, the poem called the Complaint, and ſome others. He knew how to expreſs, as well as feel, the moſt tender as well as the moſt lively emotions of ſoul.

" Forgot his Epic, nay, Pindaric, art;
" Yet ſtill we love the language of his heart."

Waller I regard as greatly inferior to Cowley in genius; but he poſſeſſed a more correct taſte and truer judgment. His Verſification, when compared with that of the majority of his predeceſſors, is eminently ſmooth and harmonious; and he contributedmuch to poliſh and refine

refine the elegant art which he cultivated. Thomſon's celebrated poem, I mean the Seaſons, I think, enjoys a reputation at leaſt equal to its merit. As Pope has been called the Poet of Reaſon, Thomſon may, with equal juſtice, be ſtiled the Poet of Nature. He ſurveyed her various ſcenes with a curious and attentive eye; and he deſcribes them with warmth, accuracy, and fidelity; and in this the real excellence of his work conſiſts. When Thomſon is not deſcribing or moralizing, he is no poet; when he aims at elevation, he is always turgid; when he wiſhes to be ſplendid, he is only gaudy.

> "From bright'ning fields of ether fair diſclos'd,
> Child of the ſun, refulgent Summer comes
> In pride of youth, and felt thro' nature's depth.
> He comes, attended by the ſultry hours,
> And ever-fanning breezes on his way;
> While from his ardent look the turning Spring
> Averts her bluſhful face."

Such mechanical poetry as this is calculated merely for grown children. The tales he interweaves are very indifferently narrated. His diction is either artificially ſtrained, or diſguſtingly familiar; and his Verſification is ſuch, that for twenty or thirty lines together, I frequently find a great difficulty to diſtinguiſh it from proſe. In a word, it is a poem in which deſcription too much holds the place of ſenſe. We read, and we commend, and pretend to admire, and at laſt we drop aſleep over it. Nevertheleſs, it is upon the whole a pleaſing popular performance, and I believe it will long remain

remain ſo; though I greatly doubt whether it will always retain its preſent degree of reputation. His poem, entitled "Liberty," I never yet could ſummon up reſolution enough to read fairly through. His ſmaller pieces merit little attention, the "Caſtle of Indolence" excepted, which is indeed a very elegant and beautiful allegory.

Young's Night Thoughts may not improperly be conſidered as a good poetical contraſt to Thomſon's Seaſons. One delighted as much to exhibit the gloomy, as the other the cheerful face of things. Young's genius was without doubt of a rank much ſuperior to that of Thomſon; he poſſeſſed, as Addiſon, I think, ſays of Lee, true poetic fire, though clouded and obſcured by thick volumes of ſmoke. In the article of ſublimity, the Night Thoughts may vie with Paradiſe Loſt itſelf, though in every other reſpect it would be abſurd to attempt a compariſon between them. The general character of Young's Verſification is that of harſhneſs and ruggedneſs, though many paſſages may be produced as exceptions. Of the earlier poetical productions of Young I am no admirer: it is to a work begun after he was ſixty years of age, when, if we will give any credit to his own declaration,

"He long had buried what gives life to live,
"Firmneſs of nerve, and energy of thought."

that he derives, and will continue to derive, his reputation: for certainly ſuch poems as the Laſt Day, and the Paraphraſe on Job, or even his ſatires and tragedies, could never entitle him

him to a permanent manſion in the temple of Fame.

It would be doing great injuſtice to living merit, after enumerating ſo many illuſtrious names who have done honour to our age and country, to omit to mention a celebrated poeteſs of our own times: I mean Mrs. Barbauld, who, in the elegant miſcellaneous collection with which ſhe has favoured the world, has exhibited the moſt beautiful examples of Verſification happily diverſified, and accommodated to the greateſt variety of ſubjects that I recollect to have met with in any one author. In the poem ſtiled "Corſica," her blank verſe makes a very near approach to the Miltonic majeſty, and the Summer-Evening Meditation is in the beſt manner of Young.—Delia breathes the very ſoul of Hammond! and the Addreſs to Wiſdom is written in the true ſpirit of Prior. The poem on the Origin of Song-Writing might have done honour to Waller; and the Ode to Spring is entitled at leaſt to "divide the crown" with Collins's exquiſite Ode to Evening. I have ſeen an allegorical poem alſo in manuſcript, by the ſame fair and elegant writer, which Spenſer would readily have acknowledged as the work of a kindred mind.

This lady, certainly, if England had produced no Carters, Montagues, or Sewards, might alone ſafely be put in competition with the moſt admired writers of her own ſex abroad; with a De Sevigné, a Des Houlieres, a Du Bocage,

or

or a Dacier. Of one ſpecies of knowledge, with which the literary world in general is well acquainted, ſhe is indeed apparently wholly deſtitute —and that is the knowledge of her own ſuperiority of genius and merit.

ESSAY XIII.

On the USE *of* REASON *in connection with* RELIGION.

THERE is an argument which has been often triumphantly urged by the Roman Catholic writers, and which is, indeed, ſo ſpecious and impoſing, ſo apparently juſt in its principle, and extenſive in its conſequences, that I do not wonder it ſhould be regarded as the pillar and ground of their faith. If, ſay they, the truth and neceſſity of a divine Revelation be admitted, it cannot be doubted but it is equally neceſſary that the true ſenſe of that revelation ſhould by ſome means be aſcertained. Now common ſenſe and daily experience fully evince, that the majority of mankind are wholly incompetent to enter into any ſuch diſcuſſions; and alſo, that the opinions of private Individuals, who may be ſuppoſed beſt qualified to form a right judgment, are ſo oppoſite and diſcordant, that there is not the moſt diſtant probability that the genuine doctrines of chriſtianity ſhould ever be eſtabliſhed on a firm and ſolid foundation, except there exiſts ſome common ſtandard of religious truth, to which it may be lawful for all men to appeal, in caſes of doubt and difficulty, and to which

which they ſhall be indiſpenſably obliged to ſubmit: and where ſhall we find that ſtandard but in the deciſions of the Univerſal Church! which is under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit!—which is founded upon a rock, againſt which the gates of Hell ſhall never prevail!—whoſe voice is the voice of God, againſt which it is folly, preſumption, and impiety for any particular member of that holy and myſtical body to oppoſe his own fallible reaſonings and unauthorized opinions. This is the faint outline of that grand argument upon which the Romaniſts always profeſs their readineſs to reſt the whole controverſy between them and the Proteſtants; and this is the argument which the advocates for Proteſtantiſm in general practice every artifice to evade, and of which they ſeem to be often ſtaggered and confounded by the force; and I do not in the leaſt wonder that this ſhould be the caſe. For many ſucceſſive centuries this maxim had been regarded as ſacred and incontrovertible; and when the Proteſtants, therefore, firſt found themſelves under the neceſſity of calling it in queſtion, they avoided giving any greater ſhock to their own prejudices, as well as thoſe of their antagoniſts, than they were by the preſſure of the occaſion led, or rather driven to do; and therefore they contented themſelves with denying the infallibility of the Church but they ſtill admitted that the Church migh juſtly claim *authority* in controverſies of faith;

and that what the Church taught was to be received as true, unleſs it could be proved contrary to the tenor of Scripture. But in the proſecution of the controverſy, the Proteſtants quickly found themſelves involved in new perplexities: for either every private Chriſtian had a right to judge whether the doctrines taught by the Church were agreeable to Scripture, in which caſe the authority of the Church was an empty ſound, without any real meaning; or if the Church was allowed to judge of the conformity of its own doctrines to the declarations of Scripture, then the authority of the Church was plainly equivalent to the infallibility claimed by the Romaniſts: The only difference, according to the obſervation of a witty writer, conſiſting in this—that in the one caſe, the Church never *could* err;—and in the other, that it never *did* err. For a long time, however, the learned and reverend champions of Proteſtantiſm contented themſelves with inſiſting upon, and making the moſt they could of this curious diſtinction: and it was not, perhaps, till the Bangorian Controverſy took place, at the beginning of the preſent century, that this abſurd and ridiculous ſubterfuge was compleatly abandoned; and that the right of individuals to appeal from the authority of the Church to the authority of the Sacred Scriptures, was admitted in its full extent, with an explicit avowal and approbation of all its conſequences.

It

It is well known how great a clamour that memorable Controverſy excited: the Church did not want for able and valiant defenders of the faith; but, alas! the fatal blow was given, and Church-authority, that mighty Dagon, was at length thrown proſtrate upon the ground! Notwithſtanding, however, that we who live in this enlightened age are able clearly to diſcern the fallacy of this boaſted argument in behalf of Church-authority, it required a force of mind and an acuteneſs of penetration, which perhaps no one man ever poſſeſſed, compleatly and at once to detect this dangerous and deluſive ſophiſm. Many generations paſſed away after the Reformation had taken place before the moſt rational, liberal, and intelligent perſons of the Proteſtant communion could prevail upon themſelves to acknowledge that every private Chriſtian was under an indiſpenſable obligation to exerciſe his own Reaſon and judgment, in forming his opinions in Religion; and that the authority of the Church, and the deciſions of Fathers and Councils, as ſuch, ought not in the ſmalleſt degree to bias his determinations. Theſe maxims, which to us appear ſo juſt and obvious, were univerſally reprobated, as fraught with the moſt miſchievous conſequences;—as lifting up the doors that hereſy and ſchiſm might enter in.—The utmoſt wildneſs and extravagance of ſentiment leading to a general ſtate of intellectual anarchy, they imagined muſt be the inevitable reſult of ſuch an unbounded freedom of diſcuſſion. It requires

indeed at preſent no extraordinary ſagacity to ſee the weakneſs and futility of theſe apprehenſions; nay, it really requires great ſtrength of mind to feel the full force of an argument, however ſubtle and plauſible, which we have always been accuſtomed to conſider as confuted; and we cannot therefore without difficulty conceive the prodigious weight of the impreſſion which it muſt have made on the minds of thoſe who had from their earlieſt years been taught to regard it as ſacred for its truth, and venerable for its antiquity. Yet it appears to me, that though human authority has been compleatly diſcarded, the province and juriſdiction of Reaſon have never been ſo accurately defined as to precluſde all further diſcuſſion upon the ſubject. It is even impoſſible perhaps to fix ſuch preciſe boundaries to her dominion as to enable any man upon juſt grounds to pronounce "hitherto ſhalt thou come and no farther;" and as no preciſe line of diſtinction can be drawn, or at leaſt can be clearly diſcerned in this caſe, ſome will be apt to attribute more to human Reaſon as a judge of divine truths than ſhe is entitled to claim; and others will be inclined to depreciate and to degrade that noble faculty of the mind below its juſt value. Notwithſtanding this remedileſs difference of ſentiment, I hope I may be permitted to offer a few obſervations upon this ſubject, without juſtly incurring the charge of preſumption; for as matter widely diffuſed may be condenſed though it cannot

not be annihilated, ſo in this caſe, notwithſtanding the impoſſibility of attaining to a preciſe coincidence of opinion, arguments may ſtill avail to to reduce thoſe differences of opinion which muſt always ſubſiſt within a narrower compaſs; and thus we may in morals, as well as mathematics, imagine the poſſibility of a perpetual approach, whilſt we acknowledge the impoſſibility of an actual contact.

And, 1ſt, I aſſert, without fear of contradiction, that Reaſon is the ſole judge of the evidences of a divine revelation: A revelation deſtitute of evidence cannot be ſuppoſed; and to appeal to authority as a ſufficient ground of evidence is a palpable abſurdity. The authority of the Church, if the claim was admitted, muſt reſt upon the authority of revelation; and the authority of revelation itſelf muſt reſt upon the authority of its evidence; and to make the authority of the evidence reſt upon the authority of the Church, is evidently to argue in a circle, and in ſo ſmall and confined a circle that the ſophiſm muſt be inſtantly detected. Accordingly, the Papiſts themſelves appeal to Reaſon as a competent judge of this matter; and very celebrated treatiſes have been written by the divines of the Romiſh communion, in which the evidences of Chriſtianity have been ably and learnedly ſtated. Reaſon then is the acknowledged judge of this queſtion; but the danger is, leaſt we ſhould require a degree of evidence which Reaſon has no right to exact. If the evi-

dence riſes to probability, we ſhould act moſt irrationally in rejecting it becauſe it falls ſhort of moral certainty!—as juſtly might we reject moral certainty becauſe it falls ſhort of mathematical demonſtration. Whoever attends to the evidences of the Chriſtian religion with impartiality and candour, muſt be compelled to allow the probability at leaſt of its divine origin: In this caſe how will Reaſon direct a man to act? to remain in a ſtate of perpetual ſcepticiſm is equally irkſome and difficult; the balance will ultimately incline either to the one ſide or the other. Now to reject a probability is to embrace an improbability: Let thoſe then who incline to infidelity in conſequence of the objections to which Chriſtianity is liable, and the difficulty they find in anſwering thoſe objections ſatisfactorily,—let ſuch men reflect upon the inſuperable difficulties with which that infidelity is itſelf attended:—Let them take the trouble to frame not only a negative but a poſitive creed, and they will ſoon ſee how much weaker and more expoſed to objection every particular and diſtinct ſcheme of infidelity is than Chriſtianity—how much leſs the poſitive evidence in its favour—how much greater the inconſiſtencies and improbabilities connected with it.

But, 2dly, Reaſon is competent to judge not only of the evidences but the doctrines of revelation: this it muſt be owned is a propoſition to which an unqualified aſſent ought not to be given; it ſtands in need of much explanation, and

and no explanation can be expected to produce univerſal ſatisfaction. Reaſon and Revelation muſt doubtleſs be in their natures perfectly reconcileable; but they may apparently differ, and in that caſe muſt revelation be explained in conformity to Reaſon, or muſt Reaſon ſubmit to be ſilenced by the voice of revelation? In order to aſſiſt our determinations upon this point, it muſt be remembered, that there is a moſt important diſtinction between Reaſon abſtractedly conſidered, *i. e.* eternal truth and rectitude, and human Reaſon; or thoſe principles which we adopt upon the preſumption of their conformity to the dictates of abſtract truth; and it is very ſuppoſable that the doctrines of revelation may differ very widely from our ideas of Reaſon, though they unqueſtionably correſpond to Reaſon as it ſubſiſts in the divine mind, *i. e.* to perfect truth, rectitude and wiſdom. Nevertheleſs, there are ſome things ſo clearly diſcernible by the light of human Reaſon, that it is impoſſible for us, without diſcarding it as entirely uſeleſs, to doubt of their agreement with right Reaſon or abſtract truth; and if it could be proved that revelation really contradicted any of thoſe principles which Reaſon indubitably inculcated, we ſhould indeed be reduced to a ſtate of the moſt diſtreſſing perplexity. If Chriſtianity, accompanied as I think it is with convincing evidence of a divine original, ſhould in expreſs terms aſſert, that the ſubſtance which I ſee in the form

of bread and wine is really and truly the body and blood of Chriſt, and that the ſame identical body ſubſiſts whole and undivided at the ſame inſtant of time in a thouſand different places, or if I could believe that this religion really aſcribes all the attributes of Deity to three diſtinct perſons, and yet maintains in the moſt unequivocal language the abſolute unity of the Divine Nature, I would without heſitation acknowledge, that Reaſon and Underſtanding were given us in vain! The ſimple dictates of Reaſon, which in caſes of this nature have a clearneſs and certainty which no ſpecies of evidence can ſuperſede, muſt deſtroy the authority of revelation; and the evidence by which this revelation is accompanied muſt, on the other hand, confound every principle of Reaſon, and "amaze indeed the very faculty "of eyes and ears:" Happily we are not reduced to this alarming ſtate. Nothing contained in the Chriſtian revelation can with the leaſt degree of juſtice be ſaid to contradict thoſe principles of Reaſon which have any pretence to be ſtyled ſelf-evident. But ſome will not ſcruple to affirm, that many articles of the Chriſtian faith may nevertheleſs be deemed irrational, as not coinciding with thoſe concluſions which Reaſon enables us to deduce from ſelf-evident principles; they think that evident marks of imperfection are diſcernible in the general ſcheme; and they fancy, as a certain Spaniſh Monarch is reported to have boaſted with reſpect to the ſyſtem

of

of the Univerſe, that if they had been conſulted a much better conſtitution of things might have been adopted. This mode of arguing and of judging appears to me to proceed from the moſt dangerous preſumption. Nothing can be more unwarrantable, nothing can exhibit a ſtronger inſtance of the fatal effects of pride, combined with folly, than the rejection of a revelation authenticated by ſufficient evidence, becauſe it may contain ſome things which may not approve themſelves to the underſtanding of the objector. Let us conſider how great was the previous improbability that a human mind ſhould be capable of comprehending the divine counſels, and how abſurd it is to expect that a ſcheme ſo far above our comprehenſion ſhould in all its parts approve itſelf to our underſtandings.

> Say of this plan the bearings and the ties,
> The ſtrong connections, nice dependencies;
> Gradations juſt, has thy pervading ſoul
> Look'd through?

The general tendency of the plan indeed we may reaſonably expect ſhould appear to be worthy of its divine author. If it could be fairly proved to be inimical to the intereſts of truth, virtue and happineſs, it would be an internal argument againſt the divine origin of it, as powerful as any external arguments which could poſſibly be produced in its favour; but it is a very weak pretence indeed for with-holding our aſſent, to alledge that thoſe intereſts are not promoted in that particular manner

manner which we ſhould have deemed moſt eligible and efficacious.

3dly, It muſt be confeſſed that Reaſon, though of admirable uſe in judging of the evidences and inveſtigating the doctrines of revelation, is yet incapable of producing uniformity of opinion: This the Romaniſts urge as an irrefragable proof of that infallibility to which they advance ſo bold a claim, and which is, as they ſay, abſolutely neceſſary to the preſervation of the unity and purity of the Chriſtian faith. But, as Dr. Clarke admirably obſerves, "the true unity "of Chriſtians is not a unity of faith in the bond "of ignorance, or a unity of profeſſion in the bond "of perſecution, but a unity of the Spirit in the "bond of peace".

Experience proves that a diverſity of ſentiments in Religion is not attended with thoſe pernicious effects which in former times even wiſe and good men in general ſo needleſſly apprehended. Thoſe who are in the habitual practice of reading the Sacred Scriptures with a view to their religious information and improvement, can ſcarcely fail to imbibe much of the ſpirit of Chriſtianity; in compariſon of which a juſt view of its ſpeculative doctrines is of little conſequence. Diverſity of opinion imbibe where it ſubſiſts affords ample ſcope for the exerciſe of ſome of the moſt amiable of the Chriſtian virtues; and it is not improbable that a coincidence of opinions may at length take place in the Chriſtian world, which the flaming zealots of

of the preſent age would view with aſtoniſhment. If, however, uniformity of ſentiment ſhould be ſuppoſed utterly and for ever unattainable, ſincerity ſurely is attainable by all; and a ſincere enquirer after truth, who is actuated by the genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity, can never fail of recommending himſelf to the Divine approbation and acceptance—who is I ſay actuated by the genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity; for I willingly acknowledge, that by far too great a ſtreſs has been placed upon ſincerity, when uninfluenced and unenlightened by a ſingle ray of that mild, humble, and benevolent ſpirit. Sincerity is indeed one of the moſt important and eſſential branches of Religion; but it is not therefore to uſurp the place of all the reſt: Sincerity is a virtue highly commendable; but ſincerity will of itſelf go but a very little way towards forming a character of diſtinguiſhed moral excellence. Virtue conſiſts in an undeviating rectitude of action, reſulting from perfect rectitude of principle; but how far ſhort does ſincerity fall of this idea of virtue. A man may be ſincere, yet almoſt all his actions may be pernicious; almoſt all his mental affections and motives of action may be deteſtable. I know not that the ſincerity of Bonner can be juſtly called in queſtion, when with a firebrand in his hand he appeared like a fiend let looſe from Hell ranging for revenge, and filling every corner of the land with ſcenes of blood and horror. Calvin was without queſtion ſincere when,

with

with unrelenting barbarity, he urged the legal murder of Servetus; but is that execrable action therefore leſs the ſubject of our indignation or abhorrence? And St. Paul, whoſe ſincerity when breathing out threatenings and ſlaughter againſt the diſciples of Chriſt no one can doubt, does not ſcruple to ſtyle himſelf the chief of ſinners, and not worthy to be called an Apoſtle, becauſe he perſecuted the Church of God. St. Paul well knew, after his converſion at leaſt, that the virtue which muſt recommend us to the favour of God does not conſiſt in a blind and furious zeal for even truth itſelf, and much leſs for pernicious dogmas fraught with falſhood and folly, but in what he ſtyles the fruits of the Spirit, patience, long ſuffering, juſtice, temperance, meekneſs and charity: "though I give my body to be burned," ſays that great Apoſtle, "and have not charity, it profiteth "me nothing." The Phariſee deſcribed by our Saviour as praying in the Temple, is repreſented as entertaining a very high idea of his attainments in moral excellence; his ſincerity as far as appears was unimpeachable; yet we are aſſured that the Publican went down to his houſe juſtified rather than the other: The truth is, that a man's believing himſelf to be virtuous no more conſtitutes virtue than a man's believing himſelf to be ſkilled in the ſciences conſtitutes learning. The Scripture declares, that if we have not the ſpirit of Chriſt we are none of his: let

let us beware then of an error ſo fatal as muſt be the ſuppoſition that becauſe we are ſincere, *i. e.* becauſe under the influence of a ſtrong deluſion, we vainly and falſely imagine our actions conformable to the ſtandard of moral rectitude, we cannot juſtly incur puniſhment for any ſpecies of miſconduct proceeding from the moſt corrupt heart or depraved inclination.

4thly, The laſt obſervation I have to make, whether it may be thought the conceſſion affords an advantage to the Roman Catholics in this argument or not, is, that it appears to me an undeniable fact, that the bulk of unlearned Chriſtians are, as the Catholics alledge, wholly incompetent to enter into thoſe diſcuſſions which are neceſſary to form an opinion upon juſt grounds, either reſpecting the evidences or the doctrines of Chriſtianity. I am ſenſible that the generality of Proteſtant writers have maintained that the evidences of Chriſtianity are ſo ſtrong, and the doctrines of Chriſtianity ſo clear, that the unlearned multitude may ſafely be left to decide for themſelves upon theſe important points; and I readily acknowledge that they ought to be left at full liberty ſo to do; but as a queſtion of fact, I cannot but admit that they are incompetent to form a true and accurate judgment; how then is this apparent incongruity to be reconciled? Conciſely, and I think ſatisfactorily, thus: I deny the claim of the Romiſh Church to infallibility; or

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of any Church whatever to any degree of authority, for the reaſons ſo often and ſo ably urged by various writers: It is a claim wholly unſupported by Reaſon or Scripture: it is a moſt daring uſurpation over the conſciences of mankind: it is raiſing an inſurmountable obſtacle in the way of religious information and improvement: "it "brings to one dead level every mind," and it has a tendency to produce an univerſal torpor of all the mental powers; but I do not think it neceſſary in order to invalidate this claim, to maintain, that all perſons are ſufficiently qualified to judge for themſelves upon religious ſubjects. I content myſelf with aſſerting, that all men have a right to judge for themſelves; and when the right is once eſtabliſhed I have no doubt but thoſe who are qualified to judge, will in general exerciſe that right; and though there may be a conſiderable difference of opinion amongſt thoſe who are beſt qualified to judge, yet when perfect freedom of inveſtigation is allowed, and the abilities exerted in the ſupport of oppoſite opinions may be ſuppoſed nearly equal, thoſe who are engaged on the ſide of truth muſt upon the whole poſſeſs a manifeſt advantage over thoſe who are engaged in the cauſe of error; and however imperceptible the bias may originally be, if it is real, the effects muſt in time be apparent. Truth muſt inſenſibly and gradually gain ground, till it ſhall at length attain a decided and permanent ſuperiority; and the experience of all ages demonſtrates that

that the bulk of mankind, ſecretly conſcious of their own incapacity, embrace almoſt implicitly the opinions of thoſe whoſe ſuperior ſtation, abilities and authority, entitle them at leaſt to reſpect and deference, and whoſe extenſive influence is upon the whole favourable to the general happineſs. As in conſequence therefore of free enquiry juſt and liberal ſentiments will ultimately prevail amongſt the higher ranks of ſociety, thoſe ſentiments will ſooner or later infallibly diffuſe themſelves amongſt the lower claſſes of mankind; not as the reſult of rational conviction indeed, ſo much as of that irriſiſtible influence which muſt always accompany ſuperiority of knowledge and ſtation. I do not however mean to inſinuate that all attempts to enlighten the minds of the multitude are uſeleſs or abſurd:—ſuch arguments as they are capable of comprehending, and ſuch as have any tendency to enlarge their ſphere of comprehenſion, ought undoubtedly to be exhibited in the moſt conſpicuous point of view. A little knowledge is ſaid to be a dangerous thing: but I believe total ignorance is much more ſo. By unremitted efforts to inſtruct and enlighten mankind, the number of competent judges muſt continually increaſe, and the minds of the multitude will be gradually prepared for the reception of thoſe truths which they may be unequal to the inveſtigation of. If the majority of Chriſtians in this enlightened country are not properly qualified to decide in controverſies of faith, certainly

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thoſe of Spain and Portugal are much leſs ſo: There are degrees of ignorance; and every advance in knowledge is favourable to virtue and happineſs; but it does not appear to me *adviſable*, becauſe the Church of Rome extravagantly claims a right to judge for every private Chriſtian, to embarraſs the queſtion by maintaining that every private Chriſtian is qualified to judge for himſelf. The right to judge is indeed unqueſtionable; but the ability to exerciſe that right is quite another thing; and though I do think it infinitely better that the moſt illiterate *Chriſtian* under Heaven ſhould take upon him to decide upon the moſt difficult queſtions in Theology, rather than fancy himſelf under an obligation of conſcience to ſubmit to the deciſions of any other man or body of men, and though ſuch an illiterate Chriſtian may undoubtedly be a very upright judge, I hope I am not, by any principle of Proteſtantiſm, compelled to acknowledge him to be *a ſeecond Daniel;* or even to allow that the majority of thoſe who paſs under the general denomination of Chriſtians, and who may be very good Chriſtians, but whoſe worldly occupations and modes of life leave them no leiſure for literary purſuits, ought to be conſidered as competent to decide upon queſtions which they have neither opportunity nor ability to diſcuſs.

ESSAY XIV.

Reflections upon EDUCATION.

THERE are two very oppoſite opinions prevailing in the world reſpecting human life; one is, that *life is a jeſt*; and for the benefit and inſtruction of poſterity, this maxim has been recorded on a monument placed amidſt the venerable remains of all that mankind have been taught to call good and great. The other is, that *life is not a jeſt*, but a moſt ſerious and important reality; that though the duration of our temporal exiſtence is ſhort and tranſitory, the manner in which it is paſſed is in the higheſt degree momentous; for if, as various natural phœnomena ſeem to indicate, and as Chriſtianity expreſsly affirms, we are deſtined by our omnipotent Creator for a future and an eternal life, and the preſent ſtate ſhould be only the firſt ſtage of our exiſtence, our future happineſs or miſery may, nay, muſt depend upon thoſe good or evil propenſities and diſpoſitions, which, in our paſſage through this world, we muſt inevitably contract. This connection between the preſent and a future ſtate of exiſtence, adds a dignity and ſolemnity unſpeakably intereſting to the vain and tranſient ſcenes of this mortal life; and

by this means a principle of action is implanted in the mind, far more powerful, as well as noble, than any which temporal motives can poſſibly inſpire. To thoſe who entertain no ſuch expectation or belief, life *muſt* appear comparatively a jeſt, an ænigma far more inexplicable than that of the Sphinx. The preſent ſtate of things, independently conſidered, exhibits a ſcene which we cannot poſſibly reconcile to our ideas of the natural and moral perfections of the Deity. By recurring to the celebrated Eſſay on Man, we may eaſily be convinced how inadequate were the powers of a great Philoſopher and Poet in conjunction for the accompliſhment of that purpoſe. The reſult of the whole bears no proportion to the aſtoniſhing diſplay of magnificence and wiſdom which we diſcover in the inveſtigation of the ſeveral parts; and if man, lord of this lower world, is himſelf to ſink into annihilation almoſt as ſoon as he is brought into exiſtence, what end or purpoſe worthy of the great Creator is anſwered by this wonderful exertion of Divine power? Surely it may be ſaid, "Man walketh in a vain ſhow;" and the wiſeſt of the human race might well exclaim, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Nevertheleſs, though men who have been accuſtomed to indulge the ſublime and elevated ſenſations which a proſpect of immortality is calculated to excite would, if totally deprived of that glorious hope, be inclined to regard the preſent ſcene of things as wretchedly trifling and contemptible, yet to

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thoſe who have never extended their views beyond the limits of the preſent life, the ſcenes before them will undoubtedly appear highly important and intereſting; and a ribband, a title, or a white wand, have been as eagerly purſued by ſome, as knowledge, virtue, and everlaſting happineſs, by others.

In the celebrated letters of Lord Cheſterfield, we ſee, with a mixture of pity and indignation, a man of high ſtation, a man of parts, of obſervation and reflection, who does not appear, even in the decline of life, to have raiſed his thoughts or wiſhes beyond that ſpecies of happineſs which is to be derived from temporal diſtinctions; of which he had himſelf experienced the vanity, but which he nevertheleſs urges his ſon to purſue with ſuch intemperate ardour, that honour, virtue, and reputation, are to be ſacrificed without heſitation at the ſhrine of the idol which his Lordſhip has ſet up. To ſay nothing of the prepoſterous nature of his Lordſhip's plan of education in other reſpects; of the abſurdity of ſuppoſing that mankind could be made the dupes of a boy; of the abſurdity of urging a youth, deſtitute of ambition, of ſuperiority of talents, and labouring under peculiar diſadvantages, to aim at the higheſt honours of the State; of the abſurdity of educating a youth in a foreign country, who was afterwards to ſeek for advancement at home; of the abſurdity of endeavouring to excite that ardent ſpirit of emulation by threats and menaces, which could only be kin-

dled by the flame of genius;—To ſay nothing of theſe, and of a thouſand other abſurdities, it is impoſſible to pardon the total want of principle which pervades the whole deteſtable ſyſtem. In a few words, it may be thus explained. Life is a jeſt; therefore, to aim at the advancement of human happineſs, as your grand object, and at the approbation of your Maker as your ultimate reward, muſt of courſe be ridiculous. To put on the appearance of generoſity, humanity, and diſintereſtedneſs, is indeed no bad policy; but the ſole end which you ought ever to purſue, either directly or indirectly, is the promotion of your own intereſt. Many things are uſeful or valuable as means; but the great end to which they are all to be conſidered as ſubſervient, is to riſe in the world; for which purpoſe you need not ſcruple to make uſe of the eſtabliſhed modes of the court; artifice, diſſimulation, and debauchery. Vice and virtue are antiquated diſtinctions; do not perplex yourſelf by attending to them; the grand diſtinction, which it is neceſſary to keep continually in view, is between that which is faſhionable and that which is vulgar. So far as virtue is connected with faſhion, it is to be followed; ſo far as vice implies vulgarity, it is to be ſhunned. There are ſome things, however, of univerſal and perpetual obligation; and though a ſtrict obſervance of the articles of the Decalogue may be diſpenſed with, never hope for advancement, or even for pardon, if you fail to enter gracefully into a room,

room, to dance a good minuet, to make a genteel bow, to pare your nails close, and to keep your teeth clean.

Having thus freely declared my disapprobation of a plan I regard as essentially wrong, I shall concisely state my sentiments respecting that which I believe to be right. I am clearly of opinion, that the culture of the human mind cannot commence at too early a period. An infant who has attained to the use of language is capable of receiving numberless ideas; and it is of grea importance that the first ideas with which the mind of a child is impressed, should be such as are favourable to virtue. The light of reason begins to dawn much sooner than is perhaps generally imagined; and the difference between children who have not passed the years of infancy, with respect both to virtue and knowledge, is such as can scarcely be believed but by those who have examined them with philosophical attention. Never was there an idea more monstrously absurd and pernicious than that started by Rousseau, respecting the propriety of keeping children in ignorance till they have attained to an age in which they may judge without prejudice. Ignorance in this case can only mean ignorance of what is good; for if the blossoms of virtue and knowledge do not appear in consequence of early diligence in sowing the seed, the weeds of idleness and vice will infallibly overspread the soil; weeds

which it will afterwards be found difficult if not impoſſible to eradicate; beſides, if the human mind could be retained in a ſtate of perfect neutrality to the age ſpecified by Rouſſeau, how abſurd is it to expect that it ſhould then be capable of deciding upon queſtions which have divided mankind for ages. In fact, the firſt opinions we embrace, at whatever time of life we may commence our enquiries, are, and muſt be, thoſe of our immediate inſtructors: Nor is the evil in the leaſt diminiſhed by delaying the period of that commencement. Happy is it when thoſe inſtructors encourage their pupils impartially to inveſtigate the opinions which they inculcate, and take a real ſatisfaction in diffuſing the liberal ſpirit of free enquiry and unbounded diſcuſſion.

I acknowledge myſelf an advocate for a very high degree of indulgence in the treatment of youth. Some very worthy and reſpectable people have unfortunately imbibed a notion, that the parental authority ought to be exerciſed with rigour, and that implicit obedience is almoſt the only leſſon which needs to be inculcated. Of the fatal effects of this plan experience exhibits the moſt melancholy proofs. Virtue is indeed with ſuch perſons the great object of this, as it ought to be of every plan of Education; but it is aſſociated with ideas ſo gloomy, it preſents an aſpect ſo harſh and diſguſting, that youth, naturally averſe to ſerioufneſs, and much more to auſterity, flies to vice as to a refuge;

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and at that critical period of life when the reſtraints ſo long impatiently ſubmitted to, muſt at laſt ſuffer relaxation, is too often ſeen to throw off every appearance of regard to that which has ever been the object of its ſecret averſion. I preſume I ſcarcely need to ſay, that I do not mean to recommend that abſurd and pernicious ſpecies of indulgence by which temporary caprice is gratified at the expence of future happineſs, but that which aims and is calculated to excite affection and confidence. All recreations, tending either to health or rational amuſement, ſhould be not only allowed but encouraged:—An unreſerved intercourſe of converſation, promoted by kindneſs, condeſcenſion, and a flattering appearance of regard and attention. The firſt principles of knowledge and virtue may be inculcated in a thouſand different ways, by a ſkilful and watchful inſtructor; and the underſtanding will make rapid and vigorous ſhoots where it has free ſcope to expand itſelf in all directions; and if the early bloſſoms appear ſomewhat luxuriant, it is far better than that "Nature's wild vigour "working at the root" ſhould be chilled by neglect, or blaſted by ſeverity. Mildneſs and indulgence, guided by good ſenſe and prudence, on the part of the parent, muſt neceſſarily generate affection and gratitude in the breaſts of the children; and I will venture to lay it down as an almoſt infallible maxim, that if children are chargeable with a failure of duty in thoſe re-

ſpects, it is owing to ſome radical error in the conduct of the parents.

As to the long-conteſted queſtion reſpecting the ſuperior eligibility of a public or private Education, I cannot but give a decided opinion in favour of the former. All the powers and faculties of the mind have a freer ſcope and a wider range in a public than a private ſeminary; and a man who has had the advantage of a public Education, will in general retain through life a certain ſuperiority over another of equal abilities and knowledge brought up under the care of a domeſtic tutor. I think, alſo, that with reſpect to learning, *i. e.* claſſical learning, public ſchools have a manifeſt advantage over private ſeminaries; and though the general rule, in this caſe, muſt after all admit of many exceptions, and the true queſtion is not, whether a public or private Education is beſt, but whether one or the other is beſt for a particular individual; yet I repeat, that I have no doubt but, for the majority, a public Education will be found moſt eligible. In order to ſecure the advantages which may, with proper care and caution, be expected from this mode of Education, the moſt aſſiduous endeavours ſhould, doubtleſs, be uſed, from the earlieſt dawn of reaſon, to inculcate juſt and noble principles of action; and for ſome years previous to the entrance of a youth into this intereſting ſcene, perhaps from the age of ſeven or eight, to twelve or fourteen,

fourteen, he would be moſt advantageouſly placed at a private ſchool, under the care of a tutor, not only qualified to direct his literary purſuits, but who would watch, with anxious ſolicitude, over his manners and morals. Not that the parental attention ſhould ſuffer any ſuſpenſion upon this account; by that mild wiſdom which ſecures the affections while it informs the underſtanding, much may be effected without encroaching upon the province, or aſſuming the authority, of a tutor, at this period, when the intellectual powers advance rapidly towards maturity, and knowledge already begins to be purſued as the means of mental gratification.

It is a very frequent ſubject of complaint, that little beſides the learned languages is attended to at the public ſchools; but I think without ſufficient foundation. At the age of thirteen or fourteen, which ſeems to be the proper period for entering into thoſe ſeminaries, no inconſiderable ſtock of knowledge may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, in a mind properly cultivated, to have been already attained. A general idea of ancient and modern Hiſtory, the firſt elements of Geographical and Mathematical ſcience, a perfect familiarity with the French language, and a conſiderable proficiency in the Greek and Latin tongues, may at leaſt be preſumed. The proper buſineſs of a public ſchool is to perfect a youth, thus prepared, in claſ-

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fical literature; and ſurely it is not poſſible to read the higher claſſics without acquiring, at the ſame time with an accurate knowledge of the languages, a knowledge of a far ſuperior kind;—a knowledge of facts, characters, and opinions, connected with the moſt diſtinguiſhed and illuſtrious periods of the general hiſtory of mankind. When an intimate acquaintance with the learned languages, and with thoſe various kinds of knowledge which are to be derived from a ſtudy of the moſt celebrated writers in thoſe languages is acquired, the proper period arrives for a removal to the Univerſities, where a regular ſuperſtructure may be erected upon the extenſive and ſolid foundation which has been previouſly laid. It is with reluctance that I preſume to paſs any cenſure upon the general mode of inſtruction adopted by thoſe learned and noble ſeminaries; I am well convinced that with right diſpoſitions, and with a mind properly prepared and cultivated, a youth may make as rapid improvements in every branch of uſeful knowledge at Oxford or Cambridge as at any ſeat of learning in Europe: Of this, the many great and illuſtrious characters formed there, afford the moſt honourable and deciſive proofs. Surely, however, in Chriſtian ſeminaries of Education, it would not be improper to pay a ſomewhat greater degree of attention to the inculcating of the principles of the Chriſtian religion. It is moſt certain that,

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excellent as it is in itſelf, and firm as is the evidence on which it ſtands, it can never be expected to produce any conſiderable effect where it has not been regularly and ſyſtematically taught. If the philoſophers of Greece and Rome made it their great object to explain, and thought their time well employed in inculcating the tenets of the ſeveral ſects to which they were attached, can it be thought unworthy the attention, or beneath the dignity of Chriſtian philoſophers, to explain and inculcate the tenets of a divine revelation? In fact this ought to be a primary object of Education in a Chriſtian country; but then it ought to be conducted in the true ſpirit of philoſophy as well as of Chriſtianity. What ſhould we have ſaid had we been informed, that it was the practice of the Grecian ſages to exact from their pupils, at their admiſſion into the celebrated Schools of Antiquity, an expreſs declaration of their aſſent to thoſe very tenets which were to be made the ſubject of future enquiry? How prepoſterous would it have appeared to them, —how contrary to the ſpirit of philoſophy, had the public profeſſion of an exploded ſyſtem been extorted from them by the State, in order to qualify them for the office of public inſtructors! —A ſyſtem originally framed in an age of comparative darkneſs, by men in no reſpect more, but in many reſpects leſs capable of forming a judgment

judgment agreeable to truth than themſelves: How would they have diſdained to fetter their ardent minds, which in the purſuit of truth ſo often "paſſed the flaming bounds of place and time" in ſuch ignoble ſhackles!—How would they have felt themſelves degraded, and how low would they have ſunk in their own eſtimation, by ſuch mental proſtitution! Yet this is the wretched, the barbarous plan which ſtill prevails in what we are pleaſed to call this enlightened age and country. It is a certain and melancholy truth, that the moſt able and intelligent men in our Univerſities are afraid to invite the attention of youth to the free inveſtigation of the principles of Chriſtianity, becauſe by ſuch an inveſtigation the inconſiſtency of their own conduct would appear in too ſtriking and painful a point of view; and very ſerious inconveniencies would ariſe from exciting in the minds of thoſe who are intended for public teachers of that religion, doubts and ſcruples reſpecting the lawfulneſs of complying with thoſe conditions which the State has unhappily thought neceſſary to enjoin.

I cannot, in this curſory ſketch, entirely omit to ſpeak of the faſhion which is become ſo univerſal—of ſending young men of fortune, after they have taken their degree at the Univerſity, to make what is called the *grand tour*. No doubt many very plauſible, and ſome very juſt things may be ſaid of the advantages

to

to be derived from foreign travel; but I am well perſuaded, that in order to attain thoſe advantages, it is neceſſary to have a mind much better prepared and cultivated than the generality of our young men of faſhion poſſeſs. To expoſe an inexperienced youth, who has a very ſlight tincture of knowledge, and no true reliſh for it, whoſe paſſions are ſtrong, and in whoſe mind no fixed principles of virtue are implanted, to counteract their influence—to expoſe a youth of ſuch a deſcription to the temptations which he muſt inevitably encounter in ſuch a ſituation, is to expoſe him to almoſt certain ruin. The advice or remonſtrances of a governor can no more avail to ſtem the torrent of diſſipation and vice, than a bulruſh can ſtop the inundations of the Nile. In fact, the very idea of appointing a governor implies an abſurdity. If a youth is ſo devoid of ſenſe or of virtue as to need a governor, he is not in ſuch a ſtate of mind as to be capable of improvement by travel. If Education has been properly conducted, the moſt dangerous and critical years of life are paſſed, at that period when it is uſual to commence traveller. The very term governor is juſtly diſpleaſing to the ear of youth now arriving at the age of manhood—it ought to be exchanged for that of companion and friend. "Let your ſon," I would ſay to the parent whom I was permitted to adviſe, "be ſole maſter of his own actions;—free from every

every ſpecies of reſtraint and controul, and place your entire dependence upon thoſe principles of virtue which you have previouſly and anxiouſly inculcated, and upon that ſenſe of honour which is ſo powerful in youthful minds; which is ſo happily calculated to aid and ſtrengthen virtue when it meets her, and which, as the poet obſerves, often "imitates her actions where ſhe is not." I own I place but little ſtreſs upon thoſe external accompliſhments and graces of behaviour which ſome ſuppoſe only to be acquired in foreign Courts. To me the moſt pleaſing manners are ſuch as are truly Engliſh; and I have known many perſons, who have never ſeen Verſailles or the Louvre, who poſſeſs an elegance and urbanity not to be exceeded by thoſe who have been preſented at every Court in Europe. Foreign manners are by no means congenial to the taſte of the Engliſh; and when the behaviour of thoſe who have been accuſtomed to good company is apparently changed, in conſequence of their reſidence abroad, it is generally changed for the worſe. I ſpeak not of thoſe who are commonly called *travelled coxcombs*, and who are ſo juſtly the ſubject of univerſal ridicule, but the behaviour of even men of ſenſe and faſhion, when they have in any degree contracted the air and manners of foreigners, is, generally ſpeaking, ſo far diſpleaſing. What may be thought grace at Paris, at London may appear grimace; and it muſt be confeſſed that travellers

travellers of real knowledge and merit are ſometimes apt to aſſume an air of ſuperiority and ſelf-importance, than which nothing can be more diſguſting, or can tend more to excite the contempt of others, who have employed their time to, perhaps, at leaſt equal advantage in their native country.

Upon the whole it appears to me, that a longer time ſpent at the Univerſity, with occaſional excurſions to the Continent, would be far preferable to the prevailing cuſtom of wandering about Europe for two or three years ſucceſſively, till in many inſtances an unaffected pleaſing Engliſhman becomes metamorphoſed into a conceited and aukward foreigner:—At leaſt it would be happy for the Continent, and much for the credit of our own country, if a ſtop was put to that egreſs of riotous and diſſipated Engliſh youth, which at preſent is ſo juſtly a ſubject of complaint abroad; and who, to the evil diſpoſitions they carry out with them, add the follies and vices of every different clime and country which they viſit. When ſuch men make it their boaſt that "Europe they ſaw," let them recollect that "Europe ſaw them too;" and they will have little reaſon to indulge any emotions of vanity derived from this imaginary ſource of ſuperiority.

ESSAY XV.

Remarks on the XXI. *Chapter of Locke's Eſſay on* HUMAN UNDERSTANDING.

PERHAPS no writer can be named, of ancient or of modern times, to whom mankind are under more extenſive obligation than Mr. Locke. By his Eſſay on Human Underſtanding, he has effected what may well be called a complete revolution of opinion in metaphyſics. Metaphyſics, which had ſo long and ſo juſtly lain under the reproach of bewildering the underſtanding in a maze of words deſtitute of real meaning:—Metaphyſics, which had ſo long diſcourſed in an unintelligible jargon, became in the hands of Mr. Locke a moſt intereſting and important branch of true philoſophy. By his Treatiſes on Government and Toleration, he fixed the civil and religious rights of mankind upon a firm and immoveable baſis; and in his Theological Works he exhibited the reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, and the ſolidity of the evidence upon which our holy religion is founded, in a clear, perſpicuous, and convincing point of view. No one can hold the name and the memory of that great man in higher veneration

veneration than myſelf; but at the ſame time I would no more ſubmit to take any opinion upon truſt from Mr. Locke than from Spinoza or Hobbes; and whenever I diſcern, or think I diſcern, an error in the writings of a man of ſuch diſtinguiſhed eminence, I am the more deſirous of its being properly animadverted upon and confuted, in order to prevent its acquiring a ſanction from the reputation of its Author. This is the only apology I think neceſſary for hazarding a few obſervations upon that celebrated chapter of Mr. Locke's Eſſay, which treats "Of Power," ſo far as relates to his repreſentation of the nature of the Human Will, and of the Liberty or Neceſſity of Human Actions. The clearneſs and preciſion of Mr. Locke's ideas, on thoſe various ſubjects which he has undertaken to diſcuſs, are, notwithſtanding the frequent embarraſſment of his ſtyle, ſo juſtly and univerſally acknowledged, that one cannot but be aſtoniſhed at the obſcurity and perplexity in which this intereſting topic, under his management of it, ſeems involved; and it is impoſſible to point out a more ſtriking contraſt than this chapter on Power, by Mr. Locke, forms to the "View of the doctrine of Philoſophical Neceſſity," by Dr. Hartley; which I regard as a maſterpiece of compoſition, and from which it is evident that the moſt profound reaſonings never need to loſe ſight of thoſe indiſpenſable requiſites of good writing, conciſeneſs, ſimplicity, and perſpicuity. I cannot but ſuſpect that Mr. Locke entered upon the inveſtigation of this celebrated queſtion with

reluctance, and that he deviated into obſcurity and inconſiſtency in treating upon it, from an apprehenſion of incurring the odium of favouring the philoſophical ſyſtem of Mr. Hobbes, who had ſome years before very ably defended the hypotheſis of Philoſophical Neceſſity in an expreſs treatiſe upon the ſubject, and who was perhaps himſelf indebted for his accurate knowledge of it to the writings of Spinoza. Now it is well known that Spinoza and Hobbes were reputed Atheiſts, and the doctrine of Neceſſity was, at the time Mr. Locke wrote, almoſt univerſally confounded with Fataliſm, which was juſtly regarded as totally irreconcileable with the doctrine of a Divine Providence, and equally at variance with the natural and moral attributes of the Deity. However unworthy of a great Philoſopher, I have little doubt but that Mr. Locke, in the inveſtigation of this queſtion, was conſiderably influenced by the prevailing prejudice againſt this tenet. I believe it biaſſed his judgment, ſo far as to prevent him from admitting the principle in its full extent, though he has admitted all the premiſes which are neceſſary to arrive at the concluſion; and I fear it induced him to adopt the diſingenuous artifice of uſing ambiguous language, in order to diſguiſe the impreſſion which it is evident the arguments of the Neceſſitarians had really made upon his mind. In a word, he appears neither to have attained to clear ideas upon the ſubject, nor to have expreſſed the ideas he had with any degree of preciſion or perſpicuity. The free agency of man may be conſidered

ſidered in two different points of view—either popular or philoſophical. In the popular ſenſe it is unqueſtionably true; in the philoſophical ſenſe it is demonſtrably falſe: but Mr. Locke obviouſly confounds theſe two different views of the ſubject; and though he admits all the premiſes from which the concluſions in favour of Philoſophical Neceſſity are deduced, he refuſes to acknowledge the juſtneſs of thoſe concluſions, becauſe there is a ſenſe in which men may be conſidered as free agents.

In this chapter there is much extraneous matter; and Mr. Locke wanders frequently from the ſubject he profeſſes to diſcuſs, to which he never reverts without great apparent reluctance: but though there are in his digreſſive obſervations very objectionable paſſages, I ſhall confine my remarks to thoſe arguments and aſſertions which bear an immediate relation to the point. "Liberty," ſays Mr. Locke, ſect. 8. "is a power in any agent "to do or to forbear any particular action, accord-"ing to the determination or thought of the "mind." This definition is conſonant to the popular view of the ſubject; and it may be called practical Liberty, which no Philoſopher ever pretended to call in queſtion. Metaphyſical Liberty is a power of forming oppoſite determinations in the ſame preciſe ſituation. A man in any given circumſtances may undoubtedly act as he wills or pleaſes; but then the act, whatever it be, is a definite act, and in the ſame preciſe previous circumſtances the ſame act would invariably take place; for the act reſults from the previous circumſtances, and

perfect uniformity in the cauſe muſt produce perfect uniformity in the effect. Whatever the ignorant or the vulgar may fancy, therefore, throughout the entire ſeries of cauſes and effects, nothing could poſſibly have happened different from what has actually taken place. The courſe of events is fixed and immutable, and thoughts, volitions, and actions, proceed in one uninterrupted concatenation from the beginning to the end of time, agreeably to the laws originally eſtabliſhed by the great Creator; and it is as impoſſible to diſturb the regular progreſſion of cauſes and effects in the mental as in the material world. A river may as ſoon be made to flow back to its fountain, as volitions can be exempted from the neceſſitating influence of motives.

Mr. Locke farther tells us, and very juſtly, ſect. 2. that "voluntary is not oppoſed to neceſſary, but to "involuntary;" that is, in other words, that there is no real contrariety in the ideas conveyed by the terms voluntary and neceſſary, but that they may both be predicated of the ſame action. A man is ſaid to act voluntarily when he is under no external conſtraint; but though he acts voluntarily, he may and muſt act neceſſarily, if the action is determined by motives previouſly exiſting in his own breaſt. A man of a charitable diſpoſition, for inſtance, beſtows a benefaction for the relief of ſome indigent object in diſtreſs. The act is no doubt voluntary, but it is likewiſe, ſtrictly ſpeaking, neceſſary; for in the preciſe ſituation of mind in which the gift

was

was beſtowed, he was irreſiſtibly influenced by motives of generoſity to confer this donation: but it may be ſaid, he could have withheld it if he had pleaſed. No doubt he could; but the queſtion is, How he could have pleaſed to withhold his benefaction at the very moment in which he was pleaſed to beſtow it? So far then Mr. Locke maintains nothing inconſiſtent with the principles of Philoſophical Neceſſity; nay, he makes the ſame diſtinctions, and defends them in the ſame manner, that the Neceſſarians themſelves are accuſtomed to do.

Again, Mr. Locke obſerves, ſect. 13. that "where "the power to act or forbear, according to the di- "rection of thought, is wanting, there Neceſſity "takes place." Moſt certainly it does. In that caſe even popular Liberty is wanting. But philoſophical Neceſſity may take place, where the power to act or forbear, according to the direction of the thought, is not wanting. In any given or definite ſituation of mind, we may either act or forbear to act, as we pleaſe. This all allow; but in the ſame preciſe ſituation of mind we cannot poſſibly do both. If, in the firſt inſtance, I determine to act, let me be placed preciſely in the ſame ſituation once more, and I muſt inevitably form the ſame determination, as, upon the contrary ſuppoſition, the determination not to act muſt be equally limited and definite. When we ſay, with a reference to any particular caſe, a man has power to act or to forbear as he pleaſes, &c. there is in fact no uncertainty in the nature of the thing;

and the ſeeming uncertainty implied in the expreſſion denotes only our own ignorance of the event. The place in which a billiard ball muſt finally reſt, after being ſtruck, is neceſſarily determined by the laws of motion, though if it is not obſtructed by any external impediment, we ſay in common language, that it is at liberty to ſettle upon any part of the billiard table.

"If this be ſo," continues Mr. Locke, ſect. 14. "I leave it to be conſidered, whether it may not help to put an end to that long agitated and unreaſonable, becauſe unintelligible, queſtion, Whether man's will be free or no? It is as inſignificant to aſk, whether man's will be free? as to aſk, whether his ſleep be ſwift, or his virtue ſquare? Liberty being as little applicable to the will, as motion to ſleep, or figure to virtue. Liberty is a power which can belong only to agents, and cannot be an attribute of the will, which is alſo but a power." Now it is obvious to remark, that it is one thing, to object to the diſcuſſion of a queſtion, as inſignificant in itſelf; and another, to object to a particular ſtatement of it, as improper. The queſtion accurately ſtated is, doubtleſs, not whether the will, but whether the man or agent be free; and Mr. Locke ſurely could not flatter himſelf that he had done much towards putting an end to the queſtion reſpecting free agency, by merely propoſing a more accurate ſtatement of it, though the former ſtatement was by no means, as he aſſerts, either unreaſonable

reaſonable or unintelligible. By the queſtion, "Whether the will be free?" was, and ſtill is, univerſally underſtood, whether the man or intelligent agent be free in willing, or in forming volitions; and I never heard of any advocates for philoſophical Liberty, who pretended that the will was free, as contra-diſtinguiſhed from the agent willing; ſo that this obſervation reſolves itſelf into little better than a quibble. To the queſtion then, "Whether a man be free?" Mr. Locke, ſect. 21. anſwers to the ſame effect as before, "that a man is as free as it is poſſible for freedom to make him, who poſſeſſes the power of acting or not acting, by the determination of his own thoughts; for how, ſays he, can we think any one freer than to have the power to do what he will?" True; ſo ſay the Neceſſitarians; but they maintain that this is perfectly conſiſtent with their grand axiom, that "volitions muſt be definite in definite circumſtances." "But, ſays Mr. Locke, "freedom, unleſs it reaches farther than this, will not ſerve the turn: concerning human Liberty, therefore, this queſtion is farther raiſed, Whether a man be free to will? which I think, ſays he, is what is meant, when it is diſputed whether the will be free." No doubt it is; and this proves with how little juſtice he repreſents it as an unintelligible queſtion. "As to that, he replies, "a man in reſpect of willing cannot be free; for, Liberty conſiſting in a power to act or not to act, it is abſolutely neceſſary

in any ſuppoſed caſe, that he prefer the one to the other; upon which preference or volition the action, or its forbearance, certainly follows." This, without doubt, is perfectly conſonant to the principles of philoſophical Neceſſity. Nay, this argument is always urged by the advocates of that hypotheſis as irrefragable; for the action, as Mr. Locke obſerves, certainly following the volition, and volitions being founded upon previous ideas of preference, from preciſely ſimilar ſituations of mind, volitions and actions preciſely ſimilar muſt inevitably reſult.

"But the next thing demanded, ſays Mr. Locke, ſect. 25. is, Whether a man be at liberty to will which of the two he pleaſes, motion or reſt?" A queſtion of which the abſurdity is manifeſt. It is to aſk, Whether a man can will what he wills, or be pleaſed with what he is pleaſed with?—A queſtion which needs no anſwer." True; and it is a queſtion, therefore, which Mr. Locke might have ſpared himſelf the trouble of propoſing. It is ſelf-evident, that man has the liberty or rather the power to will that which he wills; and all that the Neceſſitarians pretend is, that man has not the Liberty or power of willing that which he does not will. "In this, then," he repeats, ſect. 28. "conſiſts freedom; in our being able to act or not to act, according as we ſhall chuſe or will." Thus far then Mr. Locke coincides with the advocates for philoſophical Neceſſity, though his conceſſions are generally involved in a cloud of words; and he is ſtill deſirous, as it ſhould ſeem, of ranking amongſt

amongſt the friends of philoſophical Liberty. Our actions he allows to be neceſſarily determined by our volitions. He now goes on to aſk, ſect. 29. "What determines the will?" To which he anſwers, "The mind or the intelligent agent itſelf, exerting its power this or that particular way; or, more explicitly, the mind is determined by motives grounded upon feelings of ſatisfaction or uneaſineſs." This account is entirely conſiſtent with the ſyſtem of Neceſſity; for the advocates of that hypotheſis inſiſt as ſtrongly as Mr. Locke, that our actions are the reſult of our volitions, which are themſelves produced by motives, or by the mind actuated by a regard to motives; and as thoſe motives were themſelves produced by cauſes previouſly exiſting, it follows that motives, volitions, and actions, are all the definite effects of definite cauſes, and that they are all links of that

——"golden everlaſting chain,
"Whoſe ſtrong embrace holds heaven, and earth, and main."

It has, I think, been ſufficiently demonſtrated, that Mr. Locke's principles reſpecting human agency did not in reality differ from thoſe of Hartley, Leibnitz, Collins, &c. and that, in order to have been conſiſtent, he ought to have avowed himſelf a believer in the doctrine of philoſophical Neceſſity: but this, as it ſeems, he was previouſly determined againſt; and a very curious expedient, it muſt be owned, he has diſcovered, to ſerve as a ſalvo for his reputation in this critical dilemma.

dilemma. "It is natural," ſays he, ſect. 47. "to ſuppoſe, that the greateſt and moſt preſſing uneaſineſs or motive ſhould determine the will to the next action; and ſo it does for the moſt part, but not always: for the mind has a power to ſuſpend the execution of its deſires; is at liberty to conſider, examine, and weigh them; and in this lies the Liberty that man has. This ſeems to me the ſource of all Liberty; and in this ſeems to conſiſt what is improperly ſtiled free-will." Sect. 52. "This is the hinge on which turns the Liberty of intellectual beings; all the Liberty of which men are capable lies in this, that they can ſuſpend their deſires; all we can do is, to hold our wills undetermined, till we have examined the good and evil of what we deſire. What follows after that, follows in a chain of conſequences linked one to another," &c. &c. Now, if Mr. Locke had been writing a practical treatiſe of morality, I am far from denying that he would have done well to have laid ſo great a ſtreſs upon the power we have of ſuſpending our determinations. I never heard of any Neceſſarian writer who was in the leaſt inclined to call it in queſtion, or who, upon all proper occaſions, was not diſpoſed to urge men to the practice of it as much as others; but that Mr. Locke ſhould introduce it into a philoſophical work, and ſhould fancy that he had eſtabliſhed the hypotheſis of philoſophical Liberty, merely by proving that man has a power of ſuſpending his volitions, is not a little aſtoniſhing. The argument

ment is ſo futile, that were it not advanced by ſo great a man, it could ſcarcely be deemed, as Mr. Locke has truly ſaid of an abſurd queſtion relating to the will, propoſed by himſelf, to deſerve an anſwer. "Volitions, ſays Mr. Locke, are determined by motives." Of courſe, therefore, ſay the Neceſſitarians, the ſtrongeſt motive muſt determine the volition. "For the moſt part," replies Mr. Locke, "it does ſo, but not always; for the mind has a power to ſuſpend its determinations, to weigh, examine, and deliberate, before it finally reſolves," &c. Who denies all this? But ſurely a degree of ſagacity far inferior to that poſſeſſed by Mr. Locke might ſuffice to convince us, that a determination to ſuſpend a volition is a mental act, no leſs real than the final determination itſelf: that it is ſubject to the ſame laws, and can no more be produced without a motive than any other volition. We are no leſs actuated by motives, and no leſs determined by the ſtrongeſt motive, when we form a reſolution to deliberate or to ſuſpend our final judgment, than in any other ſuppoſable caſe; and to pretend that we are ever influenced by the weaker motive to reject the ſtronger, is an abſurdity almoſt too groſs for refutation. If we determine to act, there muſt be ſome motive influencing the determination; and that motive, whatever it may be, is without queſtion the ſtrongeſt motive, becauſe it *does* influence the determination. On the other hand, if we determine not to act, or to ſuſpend action, the determination muſt likewiſe be founded on ſome motive

tive which, ſo long as it influences the volition, is the predominant, that is, the ſtrongeſt motive. Of what advantage then to the Anti-neceſſarian hypotheſis is this boaſted power of ſuſpenſion? It is a power perfectly analogous to all the other powers of the human mind; a power which cannot be exerted independently of motives: and, ſo far as it is the reſult of motives, the Neceſſitarians are far from calling in queſtion its reality; and they are as well convinced as Mr. Locke of its utility. The inconſiſtency of Mr. Locke upon this ſubject is very remarkable: he repeatedly tells us, and truly tells us, that Liberty conſiſts only in a power of acting, or forbearing to act: but, upon reconſidering his own aſſertions, he is apparently alarmed at the coincidence of his ſyſtem with that of certain unpopular writers; and he muſt therefore find or make a difference, or at leaſt a diſtinction, between them. So, after much obſcure and uſeleſs prefatory matter, he retracts what he had before poſitively affirmed, and informs us, that Liberty conſiſts in the power of ſuſpending our volitions. One might reaſonably ſuppoſe, that this power was included in the power of forbearing to act; but we are told there is a very important diſtinction between them; for the power of forbearance cannot be exerciſed but in conſequence of the prevalence of ſome motive; but the power of ſuſpenſion may, it ſeems, be exerted in direct oppoſition to the prevailing motive. Surely the hypotheſis of philoſophical Liberty

Liberty never had a more weak and feeble advocate! The truth is, that throughout this whole chapter, whenever Mr. Locke argues clearly, ably, and ſatisfactorily, he argues in defence of the ſyſtem of Neceſſity, or of thoſe principles which have an intimate and inſeparable connection with it: whenever, on the other hand, he argues looſely, obſcurely, and inconſiſtently, it is in defence of Liberty: and his embarraſſment is ſo apparent, that it leads to an irreſiſtible ſuſpicion that he was not unconſcious of the futility of his own reaſonings; and his conduct can be accounted for, only by ſuppoſing that he had himſelf imbibed a great ſhare of the popular dread and abhorrence of the ſyſtem of Neceſſity, on account of its ſuppoſed dangerous and pernicious conſequences, or that he reſolved to ſacrifice in this inſtance to popular prejudice, in order to render his work more generally acceptable and uſeful. Perhaps both motives might concur to influence him, but neither of them were worthy of ſo great a man; for truth ought not to be ſacrificed to any views of temporary utility: and in this caſe, I am of opinion that the truth is highly beneficial, and that it deſerves a very favourable and welcome reception. The dangerous conſequences which many reſpectable perſons are ſo apprehenſive of, I regard as entirely chimerical: It is evident that the doctrine of Neceſſity cannot, like the doctrine of Predeſtination or Fataliſm, have any dangerous influence upon the bulk of mankind, for it is perfectly conſiſtent with the popular ideas

ideas of Liberty, with the uſe of human endeavours, of promiſes, threatenings, exhortations, rewards, and puniſhments. The Liberty of doing as they pleaſe, is the only Liberty which mankind in general can ever be brought to comprehend; ſo that the doctrine of Philoſophical Liberty, if true, as to them, is uſeleſs; and it muſt be allowed likewiſe upon the ſame grounds, that the doctrine of Philoſophical Neceſſity, if true, is as to them perfectly harmleſs: but to thoſe who are capable of inveſtigating the queſtion, and who are induced by arguments of which they really comprehend the force, to embrace this opinion, it is not only harmleſs but highly beneficial: it opens new and extenſive views of the divine government and adminiſtration; it enforces reverence to God, and benevolence to man, by motives far more powerful than any other ſyſtem can poſſibly ſupply; and it excites the moſt animating expectations of a happy termination of all thoſe mournful and calamitous ſcenes with which we are at preſent ſurrounded; and exhibits to our intellectual view a glorious, however diſtant, proſpect of a ſtate in which, to uſe the beautiful language of holy writ, "God ſhall wipe away all tears from our eyes: and there ſhall be no more death, neither ſorrow, nor crying, neither ſhall there be any more pain; for the former things are paſſed away, and behold! all things are become new."

ESSAY XVI.

REVIEW *of the* REIGN *of* CHARLES II.

IN a former Eſſay I have endeavoured to exhibit a juſt, however general, view of the means by which a great and magnanimous Princeſs, who acceded to the crown in a criſis of peculiar difficulty and danger, extricated herſelf from her political embarraſſments, and attained to the ſummit of temporal fame and proſperity. It may not, perhaps, be entirely uſeleſs to reverſe the picture, and ſhew how a Monarch, who was placed in a ſituation beyond all compariſon more favourable at the commencement of his reign, became an object of ſcorn and deteſtation long before the cloſe of it. Charles II. was endowed by nature with qualities which gave him a juſt title to popularity; and his wonderful reſtoration to the crown of his anceſtors, amidſt the univerſal acclamations of his ſubjects, after twenty years of calamity and confuſion, ſeemed to prognoſticate a reign of unexampled felicity and glory. Adverſity has been ſtyled the School of Princes; and he poſſeſſed a capacity which might have enabled him to derive the moſt eſſential benefits from its diſcipline. His knowledge, though not extenſive, or profound,

was

was of that ſpecies which in public life is of the higheſt importance; and which, if it had been rightly applied, would have conferred an honourable diſtinction upon his character. He was well acquainted with hiſtory and politics; he underſtood the intereſts of his country, and well knew the rank ſhe was entitled to hold amongſt the powers of Europe. He was poſſeſſed of the moſt inſinuating and graceful addreſs; and without departing from the dignity of his ſtation, he knew how to charm all who approached his perſon, by the unaffected condeſcenſion and engaging affability of his manners. Notwithſtanding, however, the flattering appearances which raiſed ſo high the hopes of his ſubjects, and the expectations of the world, without being chargeable with or even ſuſpected of thoſe enormous crimes which blacken the character of a Nero or a Caligula, or in modern times of a Chriſtian II. an Alexander VI. or a Richard III. he incurred before the concluſion of his reign the indignation, the odium, and contempt of every friend of liberty and of virtue.

The declaration from Breda, the appointment of the Earl of Clarendon to the poſt of Prime Miniſter, the admiſſion of Anneſley, Aſhley-Cooper, Hollis, Robarts, and Mancheſter, the leaders of the Preſbyterian party, to the Royal Counſels, and the act of indemnity which was paſſed by the convention-parliament, were all meaſures of government well calculated to conciliate the affections of the nation, and to reſtore peace, order, and

and general harmony: nay, the behaviour of the King, reſpecting the act of indemnity, ſeemed to exhibit a degree of generoſity, to which the whole courſe of his future reign furniſhes no ſimilar inſtance. When the Earl of Briſtol moved an exception to the propoſed indemnity, of ſuch a nature as in a great meaſure to defeat the deſign of it, the King came to the Houſe of Peers, and, in very explicit terms, expreſſed his diſapprobation of this ſtep; and, in conſequence of the royal interpoſition, the act paſſed without any farther delay or alteration. During the ſitting of the Convention Parliament, in which the preſbyterian intereſt predominated, and which regarded the proceedings of the government with a watchful and jealous eye, affairs were conducted with prudence and moderation. That aſſembly was diſſolved in December 1660; and in May 1661, a new parliament was convened, which quickly appeared to be of a complexion very different from the preceding one, and from which the perfidy of the King, and the violent and wretched bigotry of the Earl of Clarendon, might expect the higheſt encouragement and applauſe. That celebrated miniſter was certainly poſſeſſed of very ſhining virtues, both in public and private life: his capacity, if not of the firſt rate, was however not inadequate to his elevated ſtation; and his integrity and probity are univerſally acknowledged: he had the intereſts, not only of the King, but of the kingdom, really at heart; and though the meaſures

of his adminiſtration were often extremely exceptionable, they invariably proceeded from a firm perſuaſion that they were calculated to promote the welfare and happineſs of the community. The grand defect in the character of this nobleman was, a want of liberality and comprehenſion of mind: he was a religious bigot; a character totally incompatible with that of a great ſtateſman. He was under the influence of a thouſand weakneſſes and prejudices; his ideas of the nature and extent of regal authority were extravagantly high: he was wholly unacquainted with the principles of toleration; he was haughty, intractable, conceited, and moroſe; and entirely deſtitute of that ſpirit of mild wiſdom and enlightened benevolence, which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhed his illuſtrious ſucceſſor, the great Lord Somers.

The firſt act paſſed by the new parliament, pronounced every perſon who dared to affirm the King to be a Papiſt, incapable of holding any employment in church or ſtate; a meaſure which obviouſly tended to increaſe the ſuſpicions already entertained reſpecting this point. The biſhops, who had been previouſly reſtored to their ſpiritual functions, by virtue of the royal prerogative, exerciſed under colour of the Act of Supremacy, were now admitted to their former ſtations in parliament, from which they had been ſo long excluded. The power of the ſword, which had been the immediate cauſe of the civil war, was ſolemnly relinquiſhed, and the doctrine of non-reſiſtance was explicitly avowed. The

Crown

Crown was inveſted with a power of regulating, or, rather, of new modelling, all the corporations throughout the kingdom, at pleaſure; and all magiſtrates were obliged to declare, that it was not lawful, upon any pretence whatever, to take up arms againſt the Crown. All theſe different meaſures, however, were but ſo many preludes to the famous Act of Uniformity, which took place in the ſame ſeſſion; and which fell, like a thunderbolt, upon the devoted heads of the preſbyterian party; i. e. upon a claſs of men who conſtituted, at that period, at leaſt one half of the nation. To exhibit this act in its proper colours, it muſt be remembered, that the Convention Parliament, which reſtored the King, was compoſed chiefly of preſbyterians, and that their generoſity had ſo far exceeded the limits of diſcretion, as to induce them to rely, with unſuſpecting confidence, upon the royal declaration from Breda, in which they were flattered with the proſpect of a general amneſty and liberty of conſcience; and to reject the advice of ſome of the moſt ſagacious members of that aſſembly, who were of opinion, that ſpecific conditions ſhould be propoſed to the King; who, in that critical ſituation of his affairs, would gladly have acquieſced in any terms which the general welfare of the community had rendered it prudent or proper to inſiſt upon. By the Act of Uniformity, however, the Church was not only reeſtabliſhed in all her priſtine rights, but the terms of conformity were made ſtill more rigorous than in

any former period, with the expreſs view of excluding all of the preſbyterian denomination from the national communion; in conſequence of which, about two thouſand of the beneficed clergy voluntarily relinquiſhed their preferments on Bartholomew-Day 1662, when the Act of Uniformity, by a refinement of cruelty, was to take place, in order to prevent thoſe who ſhould reſign their livings from making any advantage of their tythes for the preceding year. After making every reaſonable allowance for that mixture of adventitious motives by which, in ſuch ſituations, human nature will be ever in ſome degree actuated, this muſt certainly be regarded as an aſtoniſhing ſacrifice of temporal intereſt to integrity and conſcience, and as exhibiting a noble proof of the deep impreſſion which the Chriſtian religion is capable of making upon the heart, and of the elevation of views and conduct which, in the moſt trying ſituations, it is calculated to excite; but when we examine minutely into the reaſons upon which this magnanimous ſeceſſion was founded, we cannot but ſtand aſtoniſhed at their extreme frivoloufneſs, and futility, and our admiration is almoſt annihilated by contempt. The leaders of the preſbyterians, who were many of them men of great learning and abilities, did not object to a national eſtabliſhment, as ſuch; they were far even from profeſſing to diſapprove of the government of the church by biſhops; to the theological ſyſtem contained in the Thirty-nine Articles, they were very

ſtrongly

ſtrongly attached; and the uſe of a public formulary of worſhip they generally regarded, not only as lawful, but expedient: To what, then, did they object? To ſubmit to re-ordination, by which the validity of the prior ordination by a preſbytery would virtually be impugned: They could not in conſcience conſent to kneel at the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper; nor could they make uſe of the ſign of the Croſs in Baptiſm; nor prevail upon themſelves to bow at the name of Jeſus; nor would they countenance the ſuperſtitions of the Romiſh Church, by wearing the eccleſiaſtical veſtments, which they reckoned amongſt the deteſtable abominations of that mother of harlots. It is difficult to determine whether a greater degree of bigotry was diſcoverable, in inſiſting upon theſe petty obſervances as terms of communion, or in rejecting them as anti-chriſtian and unlawful:—this, however, is certain, that Clarendon, who was now poſſeſſed of abſolute authority, muſt have drank deep into the ſpirit of Laud, to have urged a meaſure which had a direct tendency to alienate the minds of half the nation from the King's perſon and government; which plunged a great number of worthy and conſcientious men into the depths of indigence and diſtreſs, and which laid an extenſive foundation for a ſchiſm which ſtill ſubſiſts, and which has been productive of very pernicious conſequences; though it muſt be acknowledged that much good has likewiſe reſulted from it, but of ſuch a nature, that the faineſt idea of it could

never enter within the narrow views of that honeſt but miſtaken miniſter.

In the ſummer of 1662, the inauſpicious marriage of the King with Catharine, Infanta of Portugal, was concluded. It is not certainly known what part the Chancellor took in this affair: the truth ſeems to be, that the King had reſolved upon this alliance, and the miniſter therefore was compelled to acquieſce in that which he had too much diſcernment to approve. The pernicious effects of a catholic alliance were ſurely ſufficiently obvious by the example of the former reign; and how the intereſts of this kingdom could be promoted by eſtabliſhing the independency of Portugal, which was the great political conſequence to be expected from this union, it was not eaſy to demonſtrate. Spain was already ſunk much too low in the ſcale of power, and nothing could more effectually contribute to confirm the dangerous aſcendency already acquired by France, than this abſurd and impolitic meaſure. In the ſame year a tranſaction took place, which has frequently been repreſented as highly ſcandalous, and even criminal; I mean, the ſale of Dunkirk; it does not, however, I muſt confeſs, appear to me in this heinous light. The revenue of the Crown was at this period very narrow, and the expence of maintaining Dunkirk was great; and though it is undeniable that a powerful kingdom cannot, without incurring ſome diſgrace, part with any of its poſſeſſions for pecuniary conſiderations, yet it muſt be allowed

allowed that Dunkirk was of no real uſe, and that it was a very heavy burden upon the Crown. The diminution of the national honour, by the ſale of the place, was therefore the only reaſonable objection to which the ceſſion of it was liable. An unfortunate idea has been long prevalent in this country, that eſſential benefits are to be derived from the poſſeſſion of fortreſſes in foreign kingdoms; and Calais, Dunkirk, Port Mahon, and Gibraltar, have ſucceſſively been occupied, at an immenſe expence of blood and treaſure, with a view to the attainment of theſe chimerical advantages. Gibraltar alone, at a moderate computation, has, ſince the year 1704, when it was firſt captured, coſt this nation upwards of thirty millions ſterling.—A few more ſuch conqueſts, and we are undone!

Before the cloſe of this year, the King exhibited plain indications of that attachment to the catholic religion, which was ſo remarkable a characteriſtic of the Stuart family, and which at length terminated in their total ruin. In December the King iſſued a declaration, in which he expreſſed his intention of mitigating the rigour of the penal laws, in favour of his peaceable non-conforming ſubjects, by virtue of his diſpenſing power; but the Houſe of Commons, who were equally adverſe to papiſts and preſbyterians, ſtrongly remonſtrating againſt the propoſed indulgence, the King gave the firſt public proof of that cautious and accommodating ſpirit, which never forſook him even when

engaged in the proſecution of the deepeſt and moſt dangerous deſigns, by immediately deſiſting from his project; and, in order to pacify the Parliament, a proclamation was ſoon after iſſued againſt Jeſuits and Romiſh prieſts. From this time, however, it was obſerved, that the Earl of Clarendon began to decline from that height of favour he had hitherto enjoyed: the King became ſenſible, that this inflexible miniſter could never be brought to ſupport any deſigns which might be formed, either for the extenſion of Prerogative or the advancement of Popery. The reſolution taken by the Court in the following year, not without the concurrence of the Parliament, and the approbation of the nation in general, to declare war againſt Holland, evidently marked the declenſion, or rather the annihilation, of that nobleman's authority.—The King's ſettled averſion to the manners, government, and religion of the Dutch nation, was the real ground of this war; and the jealouſy entertained of thoſe induſtrious republicans, as commercial rivals, was the cauſe of its popularity; it was, however, ſo palpably unjuſt, that the Chancellor, whoſe probity remained unſhaken in the midſt of temptation, openly remonſtrated againſt it, but without any effect. The war, however, was not carried on with that ſucceſs which was expected: France and Denmark declared in favour of Holland; and the King, notwithſtanding the memorable inſult he received from the Dutch fleet, commanded by De Ruyter, who in the ſummer of 1667 ſailed up the Medway, and burnt

burnt ſeveral men of war lying in that river, thought proper to ſign a treaty of peace at Breda in July, and to reſerve to a more favourable opportunity, the complete gratification of his hatred and revenge. The diſgrace of the Chancellor immediately followed; popular prejudices ran high againſt him; and the King had the baſeneſs and ingratitude to encourage a parliamentary impeachment for high treaſon againſt the man to whom he owed the moſt important obligations, who had been the guide and counſellor of his youth, and in whom he had once placed the moſt unlimited confidence:—happily he found means to eſcape into France; where he ſpent the remainder of his life in philoſophic and dignified retirement.

The firſt political meaſure of the Court, after this event, has met with very great and deſerved applauſe. I refer to the famous triple alliance concluded between England, Holland, and Sweden, for the avowed purpoſe of putting a ſtop to the military progreſs of the French Monarch; whoſe power began, about this time, to appear extremely formidable, and who had, in contempt of every appearance of juſtice, entered the Spaniſh Low Countries with a numerous army, and threatened to make an entire conqueſt of thoſe rich and extenſive provinces. Louis, however, did not chuſe to riſque a rupture with this potent confederacy; and for a ſhort time England, in conſequence of this ſpirited conduct, appeared in her proper ſtation, as the great bulwark of the common liberties of Europe. Some faint attempts

attempts were alſo now made by Buckingham, the new miniſter, to procure a relaxation of the terms of conformity: but the temper of the Commons appeared totally adverſe to every idea of that nature. They even inflicted additional penalties upon Nonconformiſts; and, by a remarkable clauſe in the act paſſed againſt conventicles, the malignant ſpirit by which they were actuated, is ſtrikingly manifeſted. If any diſpute ſhould ariſe with reſpect to the conſtruction of the act, the judges are directed, contrary to the univerſal practice of the Engliſh courts of judicature in the interpretation of penal ſtatutes, to explain the doubt in the ſenſe leaſt favourable to the delinquent. Such was, indeed, the violence with which the Legiſlature now proceeded, that, had not the political circumſtances of the times undergone an unexpected revolution, another Marian perſecution was juſtly to be apprehended.

Towards the end of the year 1669, the principal executive offices of government were filled by Clifford, Arlington, Buckingham, Aſhley Cooper, afterwards Earl of Shafteſbury, and Lauderdale, who compoſed that adminiſtration ſo well known by the appellation of the CABAL; men who, to borrow the language of Lord Clarendon, had "heads to contrive, hearts to approve, and hands "to execute, any miſchief:" and it may with ſtrict juſtice be affirmed, that the King, in concert with theſe abandoned miniſters, was engaged in a conſpiracy againſt the religion, laws, and liberties of his kingdom. The diſſimulation and perfidy of Charles

Charles are ſuch as to make it extremely queſtionable, whether he ever really entered into the views with which the triple alliance was formed: however that may be, it is certain that within two years after that event, his political conduct was totally changed; and, in an interview which took place in the ſpring of the year 1670 with his ſiſter, Henrietta, Ducheſs of Orleans, a ſecret treaty was negociated with the French King, for the purpoſes of ſubverting the Republic of Holland, of making the authority of Charles abſolute, and of eſtabliſhing once more the Romiſh religion in the realms of Britain; as a prelude to which, Charles was formally abſolved, and received into the boſom of the Catholic Church. In purſuance of this plan, the King had the unparalleled aſſurance to convene the Parliament in October, and to procure ſupplies to a very large amount, under pretence of the danger to be apprehended from the increaſing power of France, and the obligation and neceſſity of ſupporting the triple alliance. When money was thus obtained, the maſk was thrown off, and military preparations were openly made; but, in order to ſecure an additional ſupply, as nothing farther could be expected from Parliament, an infamous reſolution was taken, previous to a declaration of war, to ſhut up the Royal Exchequer; by which means, the vaſt ſums advanced by the bankers, upon the credit of the funds provided by Parliament, were confiſcated. The diſtreſs, conſternation, and ruin, conſequent on this enormous violation of public

public faith, did not prevent the Court from taking another ſtep, if poſſible, ſtill more alarming, and fraught with ſtill more extenſive conſequences. This was the famous declaration of indulgence, by which the King took upon him, by virtue of his prerogative, to ſuſpend all the penal laws at once. The Lord Keeper, Sir Orlando Bridgeman, nobly refuſed to affix the great ſeal to this declaration; for which he was immediately removed from his office, and Shafteſbury advanced to the dignity of Chancellor. The deſign of introducing Popery was now become apparent to every one, and the actual declaration of war againſt the Dutch, which quickly followed, raiſed the indignation and apprehenſions of the nation to the higheſt pitch. The ſucceſsful campaign of 1672, in which the United States were reduced to the brink of ruin by the arms of Louis XIV. encouraged the King, after an interval of near two years, to aſſemble the Parliament; and the Seſſion was opened by a ſpeech from the throne, expreſſed in a very high tone of authority; he ſpoke of the war not only as juſt, but neceſſary, and as what he was fully determined to proſecute; and he informed the Houſe that he had iſſued a declaration of indulgence, from which he had experienced very happy effects; to which he ſhould therefore adhere, and the validity of which he would not ſuffer to be queſtioned or oppoſed. Notwithſtanding the courtly diſpoſition of which this Houſe of Commons had given ſo many proofs, and their former baſe and criminal compliances, it muſt be acknow-

acknowledged that upon this great occaſion, which involved in it the moſt eſſential intereſts of the whole community, they acted in a manner worthy of the repreſentatives of a free and ſpirited people. They firſt paſſed a reſolution of ſupply; but before they proceeded to ſubſtantiate the vote, they framed a remonſtrance againſt the declaration of indulgence; to which the King replied in reſolute terms. The Commons repeated their application in a firm and deciſive tone; and when matters were thus brought to a criſis, Charles, who found himſelf on the edge of a precipice, and whoſe genius was not calculated for great and continued exertion, thought proper, on a ſudden, to retreat. After aſking, to ſave appearances, the opinion of the Houſe of Peers, which of courſe coincided with that of the Commons, he ſent for the declaration, and with his own hand broke the ſeal; acknowledging to the whole world, by this act, that his want of courage bore a very exact proportion to his want of wiſdom, and want of honeſty. Shafteſbury, the daring, the unprincipled, and deep-deſigning Shafteſbury, no ſooner perceived that the King began to waver and to heſitate, than he reſolved to provide for his own ſecurity; and, without any previous notice, to the amazement of the Court, when the queſtion was agitated in the Houſe of Peers, he gave a decided opinion, in a very eloquent ſpeech, for the recal of the declaration; which he aſſerted, however laudable in its intention, was, ſince the intervention and ſolemn diſapprobation of the Parliament, become wholly

wholly indefenſible. Such were the tranſcendant abilities of this nobleman, that, notwithſtanding the turpitude of his political conduct, he was received by the leaders of the oppoſition with open arms, and from that period became the AHITOPHEL of all their counſels. The Houſe of Commons purſued the victory they had gained with great moderation: they even appeared deſirous to avoid urging the King to deſperate extremities. No mention was made of the violation of the triple alliance, or of the ſhutting up the Exchequer. An act of indemnity was paſſed, with a view chiefly to ſcreen the miniſters of the Crown from any farther enquiry; and the reſolution of ſupply, to the great diſappointment of the Dutch, paſſed into a law: in return for which, the King gave the royal aſſent to the famous Teſt Act; which required every man, holding a public office, to receive the ſacrament according to the uſage of the eſtabliſhed Church, and to abjure the doctrine of tranſubſtantiation. This was a vigorous and well aimed ſtroke; and as the Duke of York, who reſigned his commiſſion of High Admiral, with tears declared, the moſt fatal blow that the Roman catholic intereſt could have received. Soon after the Parliament roſe, the treaſurer's ſtaff was taken from Clifford, who had become extremely obnoxious by the intemperate zeal with which he had ſupported the declaration of indulgence, and who was now incapacitated by the teſt, and given to Sir Thomas Oſborne, created Earl of Danby; a man not of ſplendid talents,

lents, but cautious and prudent, and who, in the preſent ſituation of affairs, ſeemed not ill qualified to fill that high and important ſtation.

In the month of October, 1673, the Parliament was again convened; but a more refractory ſpirit began now to appear. The Commons were highly offended with the treaty of marriage then in agitation between the Duke of York and a Princeſs of the Houſe of Modena, and remonſtrated warmly againſt it. They voted the alliance with France to be a grievance, and came to a reſolution that they would grant no farther ſupply, unleſs the Dutch obſtinately refuſed to treat of peace; upon which the King, who had relinquiſhed thoſe magnificent projects which he had ſo lately entertained, thought proper to conclude a ſeparate peace with Holland, through the mediation of the Spaniſh Court, in the beginning of the year 1674. Great rejoicings were made on account of this peace, and it was hoped that the King, convinced of his paſt errors, would endeavour to retrieve the eſteem and affection of his ſubjects by his future conduct. To confirm theſe favourable impreſſions, Sir W. Temple, who negotiated the triple alliance, and who ſtood higher than any man in the confidence of the States, was again appointed ambaſſador at the Hague: the mediation of the King was ſolemnly offered in order to effect a general peace, and Nimeguen fixed on as the place of congreſs. As the continuance of the war could no longer anſwer any political purpoſe, the King may reaſonably be ſuppoſed

ſuppoſed ſincere, if not zealous, in his endeavours to reſtore the tranquillity of Europe.—Louis alſo, whoſe ſchemes of ambition, by the defection of England, were totally fruſtrated, and who now found himſelf engaged alone againſt a formidable confederacy, though his armies ſtill maintained a ſuperiority in the field, was not averſe to a treaty; but the Prince of Orange, ſtrengthened by the alliance of the Imperial and Spaniſh Courts, and hoping for the acceſſion of England, was ſecretly diſinclined to liſten to overtures of reconciliation, and aſpired to the glory of humbling the pride of that haughty monarch, whom he regarded with deteſtation, not merely as the unprovoked invader of his native country, but as the common enemy and diſturber of Europe. The French arms, however, under the conduct of thoſe conſummate generals, Condé, Turenne, and Luxemburg, ſtill continued to make a rapid progreſs; and the Parliament, finding the mediation of Charles not attended with ſucceſs, in the Seſſion held in February 1677 after a long interval, during which it appears that large ſums were remitted from France, voted an addreſs to the King to enter into a league offenſive and defenſive with the States General. The King affected to reſent this interference as an encroachment upon his prerogative, and, in anger, immediately adjourned the Parliament. The fact was, that he had actually ſold his neutrality to France, and that he had regularly received a penſion from that court to the amount of two millions of livres,

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as the price of his honour and conſcience. Throughout his whole reign, however, it was contrary to the maxims of policy by which Charles was governed, to riſque a ſerious or violent rupture with the Parliament; and he was convinced that ſome popular meaſure was abſolutely requiſite, in his preſent circumſtances, to palliate his conduct, and in ſome degree to redeem his reputation; and no meaſure could more effectually anſwer thoſe purpoſes, than the marriage of the Princeſs Mary, eldeſt daughter of the Duke of York to the Prince of Orange, who by this alliance might be led to entertain no very diſtant proſpect of ſucceeding to the Engliſh Crown. When this intention was made public, the higheſt degree of ſatisfaction was expreſſed by all parties; and the Prince arriving in England at the end of the campaign, the marriage ceremony was performed, to the great ſurprize and chagrin of the French Monarch; who received the intelligence, to uſe the expreſſion of Montague, the Engliſh Ambaſſador at Paris, "as he would have done that of the loſs of an army." The good conſequences expected from this union did not, however, immediately appear. The King, indeed, pretended to enter into an amicable conſultation with the Prince reſpecting the terms of the treaty of peace; which were at laſt ſettled in ſuch a manner as to give ſatisfaction to the allies; and Charles proteſted, that if the plan then concerted was rejected by Louis, he would immediately join the Confe-

deracy. After the Prince's departure, however, he resumed his clandestine negotiations with France, made great concessions and abatements in the terms originally projected; for which he received pecuniary compensations from Louis: And though Charles, finding that he incurred the indignation and contempt of all parties, by the base duplicity of his conduct, seemed at length resolved in earnest to adopt vigorous and decisive measures, the Parliament no longer appeared disposed to confide in his professions; and the allies, despairing of effectual support from England, signed a peace with France at Nimeguen, in August 1678.

It appears from late discoveries, that the patriotic party in the House of Commons, led by Sydney, Russel, &c. were secretly averse to engage the nation in a war with France, notwithstanding the apparent incongruity of their public conduct; and in this they concurred with a great majority of the wisest and most dispassionate members of the United States, though not with the sentiments of the Stadtholder, by whose authority and influence alone the war, without any political necessity, had been so long continued. The leaders of the opposition in Parliament well knew that no real danger was now to be apprehended from France. The King had it in his power to dictate the terms of the treaty of peace, and they with good reason entertained the strongest jealousies and suspicions, that the immense sums which

which muſt be voted, and the vaſt armaments which muſt be raiſed, in order to carry on a war againſt France, might eventually be directed againſt the religion and liberties of this kingdom. They were fully acquainted with the deep and dangerous deſigns which the King had formerly harboured againſt his ſubjects, and which want of power, and not want of inclination, had at length compelled him to abandon. The Court of France, for very different but very obvious reaſons, was equally ſolicitous to prevent the King from joining the Confederacy; in conſequence of which accidental union of intereſts, intrigues were carried on between the French Ambaſſador and the members of Oppoſition, and great ſums of French gold were diſtributed with the approbation of even ſuch men as Ruſſel, Sydney, and Hollis, in order to accompliſh a great political purpoſe, which unhappily was not to be effected by open and honourable means. Men of virtue and integrity, who hold the noiſeleſs tenor of their way through the cool ſequeſtered vale of private life, are apt to feel a much greater degree of indignation at theſe irregular practices, than the nature of the facts will juſtify. "Fiat juſtitia ruat cœlum," is with ſuch men a fundamental maxim of political morality. They conſider not that virtue is itſelf founded upon utility, and that the end is not to be ultimately ſacrificed to the means; and when the public ſafety is the end in view, an object of ſuch tranſcendant importance will certainly juſtify the uſe of ſuch

means as are indiſpenſably neceſſary to its attainment. Had the nation fallen again under the yoke of Popery and arbitrary power, in conſequence of thoſe refinements of delicacy, or ſcruples of conſcience, by which, now the danger is paſt, we are ready to affirm that the patriots of the laſt century ought to have been actuated, Ruſſel and Sydney, Lyttelton and Hollis, might have a juſt claim to regard and eſteem, as honeſt and well meaning men; but poſterity would have had little reaſon to applaud their ſagacity as ſtateſmen, or to venerate their memories as enlightened patriots.

England, after the concluſion of the peace of Nimeguen, remained in a ſtate of extreme diſſatisfaction and uneaſineſs; the honour as well as the intereſt of the nation was thought to be ſacrificed. It was evident that France had obtained much more advantageous terms than ſhe was entitled to expect. The King was univerſally acknowledged to be the arbiter of the peace, and he had juſtly incurred the imputation of having been bribed to betray the intereſts of the Confederates. Of Charles's predilection for Popery, alſo, doubts could no longer be entertained; and though the King's natural good ſenſe, as well as his want of political firmneſs, had prevented him, and would probably continue to prevent him, from urging matters to any deſperate extremity himſelf, the attention of people began now to be fixed on his immediate ſucceſſor, whoſe bigoted attachment to the Romiſh religion became every day more apparent; whoſe temper

was

was known to be extremely violent, whoſe capacity was proportionably narrow, and whoſe obſtinacy was ſyſtematic and invincible. At this critical juncture an incident happened, important in itſelf, but much more ſo in its conſequences, attended by very extraordinary circumſtances, ſome of them of a very dark and myſterious nature, and which time has not enabled the moſt ſagacious hiſtorians completely to elucidate. In the month of Auguſt 1678, the King walking, as his cuſtom was, in the Mall, was addreſſed by a ſtranger, who informed him that a plot was concerted againſt his life: Upon being referred to Lord Danby for examination, he introduced to that miniſter various other perſons, amongſt whom was the famous Titus Oates, who all agreed in the reality of a plot, not only to murder the King, but to extirpate the proteſtant religion; after which they pretended the Crown was to be offered to the Duke of York, who was to receive it as a gift from the Pope. To this evidence was appended a prodigious variety of incoherent and incredible circumſtances. When the witneſſes were farther examined before the Privy Council, ſeveral perſons of very high rank were accuſed; and Coleman, ſecretary to the Duke of York, was expreſsly affirmed to be in the whole ſecret of the conſpiracy. When the papers of Coleman, however, were ſeized, nothing more appeared than a fiery and intemperate zeal for the reſtoration of the catholic religion, and the extirpation of hereſy, and ſome ſanguine expreſſions of hope that a favourable

vourable opportunity would ſhortly preſent itſelf for the accompliſhment of theſe glorious purpoſes. This certainly was far from amounting to the diſcovery of a plot; and men were at a loſs what to think of the teſtimony of theſe informers, who were men of extreme profligacy of character; when the murder of Sir Edmundbury Godfrey, a popular magiſtrate, by whom the depoſitions had been taken, threw the whole nation into a paroxyſm of conſternation and rage: he was found at a conſiderable diſtance from his own habitation, with evident marks of violence about his perſon, and his own ſword thruſt through his body. It was immediately concluded that he was aſſaſſinated by the Papiſts; and the reality of the plot was no longer doubted. During the height of this political ferment, the Parliament aſſembled, and almoſt immediately paſſed a vote, "That a damnable and helliſh Popiſh plot was actually carrying "on for aſſaſſinating the King, ſubverting the Government, and rooting out the Proteſtant Religion:" and the Lords Powis, Arundel, Stafford, Petre, and Bellaſis were, upon the evidence of Oates, &c. committed to the Tower, and ſoon after impeached for high treaſon. While the Houſe of Commons was deeply engaged in the proſecution of this buſineſs, which Lord Danby himſelf, contrary to the King's inclination, had promoted a parliamentary inveſtigation of, a diſcovery was made, which put a ſudden termination to the credit and authority of that nobleman. Whilſt the nego-

negotiations for peace were depending, in the year 1677, the Lord Treaſurer was officially privy to, and in ſome meaſure concerned in, the ſcandalous conceſſions made by the King to the prejudice of the allies, and the conſequent equivalents in money received from the French Court. It is true, that nobleman always expreſſed his diſlike of theſe proceedings, which were chiefly carried on by the intervention of Montague, the Engliſh Ambaſſador; a man of addreſs, whoſe principles were never found at variance with his intereſt. This man aſpired to the office of Secretary of State, which Sir William Coventry was willing to reſign in his favour, for the ſum of ten thouſand pounds. Montague applied in very humble and adulatory terms to the Lord Treaſurer, to prevail upon the King to ratify this curious bargain; but finding that Sir William Temple, by the recommendation of Lord Danby, was nominated to that office, he left Paris with great precipitation, and to the confuſion and aſtoniſhment of the miniſter, exhibited a charge of corruption againſt him in the Houſe of Commons, though he had himſelf been far more deeply concerned in thoſe very tranſactions upon which the accuſation was grounded. The Houſe of Commons, inflamed with this intelligence, immediately voted an impeachment for high treaſon againſt the Treaſurer. The Peers, however, refuſed to commit Danby upon a charge of treaſon ſo weakly founded. The Commons perſiſted in their demand, and great conteſts being likely to ariſe upon

this point, the King, who plainly perceived that this Houſe of Commons, formerly ſo ſubmiſſive and loyal, was no longer to be either cajoled, or over-awed, thought proper firſt to prorogue, and ſoon after to diſſolve the Parliament, which had now ſat almoſt eighteen years.

The new Parliament, which met in March following, 1679, ſoon diſplayed a ſpirit of jealouſy and oppoſition to the Court, at leaſt equal to their predeceſſors. The impeachment of Danby was revived; but the King had previouſly granted him a pardon under the great ſeal, which he affixed to it with his own hands: But the Commons affirmed, that no pardon could be pleaded in bar of impeachment; and Danby, who had abſconded, but who choſe to make his appearance, rather than to incur the penalties of a bill of attainder, was immediately committed to the Tower. The Houſe proceeded with equal violence in the proſecution of the pretended Popiſh plot, the exiſtence of which ſtill depended upon the teſtimony of the infamous Oates, and his ſtill more infamous accomplices. The vote of the former Parliament was renewed; and Colonel Sackville was expelled the Houſe for preſuming, ſomewhat indiſcreetly, to call in queſtion its reality. Even the courts of juſtice upon this occaſion became the mere inſtruments of parliamentary and popular vengeance; nor did the nation awaken from its delirium, till the ſcaffold had ſtreamed with the blood of various perſons of high diſtinction, and great numbers of inferior rank, both

both clergy and laity, had fallen a ſacrifice to this egregious impoſture. Though it muſt be acknowledged that nothing was diſcovered, after the moſt indefatigable inveſtigation of this affair, which could poſſibly be conſtrued into a plot or conſpiracy, by any mind not diſtempered by the rage of faction, yet the Parliament, as well as the nation, had ſufficient grounds to apprehend that, in the event of the King's deceaſe, the moſt vigorous attempts would be uſed by his ſucceſſor, to reeſtabliſh the Romiſh religion in theſe realms, with its natural, and in this caſe, its inſeparable concomitant, arbitrary power. It was, therefore, with the higheſt degree of public approbation, that the Houſe of Commons came to an unanimous vote, "That the Duke of York's being a Papiſt, and "the hopes of his ſucceeding to the Crown, had "given the higheſt countenance to the preſent de-"ſigns of the Papiſts, againſt the King and the "proteſtant religion." This was regarded, and it was unqueſtionably intended, as the prelude to a bill for excluding him from the throne. Charles, who held his brother's underſtanding in juſt contempt, and who had little affection to his perſon, was, however, fully determined, and he adhered to his determination with a degree of firmneſs of which he was thought wholly incapable, never to give his aſſent to a meaſure which appeared to him in the higheſt degree violent and unjuſt. Previous to the introduction of this famous bill, therefore, he propoſed to the Parliament, in a very

very gracious and conciliatory ſpeech, a plan of limitations, which would have effectually ſecured the religion and liberties of the nation; and at the ſame time declared, that if any thing farther could be deviſed by the wiſdom of Parliament, as an additional ſatisfaction, without defeating the right of ſucceſſion, he was ready to conſent to it. I believe it is now very generally acknowledged, that limitation, and not excluſion, ought to have been the object of Parliament; but upon this occaſion, that fundamental maxim of true policy was too much neglected, that we are ever to aim not at that which is beſt in itſelf, but at the beſt of thoſe alternatives which are practicable; though it muſt be confeſſed, that the King had given ſo many proofs of the flexibility of his temper, in the courſe of his reign, and of his extreme reluctance to riſque a total rupture with Parliament, that there was ſome reaſon to believe he might ultimately be induced to concur in the rigorous and popular plan of excluſion. Poſſeſſed with theſe ideas, the Houſe of Commons rejected with diſdain the compromiſe offered by the King, and without any delay paſſed the bill of excluſion, by a great majority of votes; though, by a clauſe of it, the Duke was declared guilty of high treaſon if, after the deceaſe of the King, he appeared within the limits of the Britiſh dominions. In the vain hope of mollifying the untoward diſpoſition of the Commons, the King at this period paſſed the memorable Habeas Corpus Act; though the

the Duke of York affirmed to him, that with such a law in being no government could subsist. Finding, however, that no impression was to be made by any act of grace or condescension, he took a sudden resolution to dissolve the Parliament, and writs were at the same time issued for a new Parliament, which nevertheless did not meet till the succeeding summer. In the interim, Shaftesbury, now the oracle of the opposition, attended by Russel, Cavendish, Grey, and many other persons of the first distinction, publicly appeared in West-minster Hall, and presented the Duke of York to the grand jury of Middlesex as a Popish recusant. This unprecedented act of audacity was intended by the popular party to convince the Court, as well as the world, that they were firmly resolved never to listen to any terms of accommodation with the Duke, and that his exclusion from the throne was a point which, at all hazards, they were determined to insist upon.

At length, in October 1680, the Parliament was convened, and the session was opened with a very judicious, animated, and even affectionate speech from the throne. At this period, if at any time, Charles was sincerely desirous of living upon terms of mutual confidence and harmony with his subjects. His own excellent understanding could not but suggest to him, that the numerous difficulties and embarrassments in which he had been involved, had arisen almost entirely from his own misconduct; his love of ease, and the advanced age

to

to which he had now arrived, were ſtrong inducements to him to avoid thoſe meaſures which had a tendency to inflame the Parliament, or to diſguſt the nation: and ſince the alliance with the Prince of Orange, he was leſs inclined to a cloſe connection with Louis, whoſe conduct for a certain period, immediately preceding the peace of Nimeguen, he had even deemed, after all the obloquy he had incurred upon his account, highly ungrateful and injurious, and of which he ſtill retained a deep reſentment. In this ſpeech, truly worthy of a Britiſh Monarch, he again informed the Parliament that he was willing to concur in any expedient for the ſecurity of the Proteſtant Religion, provided the ſucceſſion were preſerved in the due and legal courſe. After ſtating his pecuniary wants, for which he truſted Parliament would provide, he added, "But that which I va- "lue above all the treaſure in the world, is a per- "fect union among ourſelves. All Europe have "their eyes upon this aſſembly; if any unſeaſon- "able diſputes do happen, the world will ſee that "it is no fault of mine: I have done all that it "was poſſible for me to do, to keep you in peace "while I live, and to leave you ſo when I die. "But from ſo great prudence and good affection "as yours, I can fear nothing of the kind; but "do rely upon you all, that you will do your "beſt endeavours to bring this Parliament to a "good and happy concluſion." The mildneſs and moderation of the King were not however attended

attended by any ſenſible or ſalutary effects. In a few days the Bill of Excluſion was again introduced, paſſed by a great majority, and carried up to the Lords; who, influenced chiefly by the eloquence of the Marquis of Halifax, after vehement debates, at length determined to reject it. The Commons immediately voted an addreſs for the removal of that nobleman from his Majeſty's counſels and preſence for ever; and this addreſs was ſoon after followed by another in the higheſt degree inflammatory; in which all the abuſes of government, which had been the ſubject of complaint almoſt from the beginning of the King's reign, were inſiſted upon; and the "damnable and helliſh Popiſh plot" is openly aſcribed to that party, under whoſe influence it is plainly inſinuated that all the meaſures of government originated. They likewiſe voted, that whoever adviſed his Majeſty to refuſe the excluſion bill, were enemies to the King and Kingdom, and that, till this bill were paſſed, they could not, conſiſtently with the truſt repoſed in them, grant the King any manner of ſupply. No farther hopes remaining of bringing the Commons to any better temper, the King diſſolved the Parliament in January 1681; but, deſirous to make one more effort to effect a reconciliation with his people, he ſummoned another Parliament to meet at Oxford, in March. In his ſpeech at the opening of it, he told them, in a tone of ſerioufneſs and dignity,

that

that though he had reaſon to complain of the unwarrantable proceedings of the former Houſe of Commons, no paſt irregularities could inſpire him with a prejudice againſt thoſe aſſemblies. He now afforded them yet another opportunity of providing for the public ſafety; and to all the world he had given one evidence more, that on his part, he had not neglected the duty incumbent on him. Such, however, was the infatuation of the Houſe of Commons, that though the Miniſters of the Crown propoſed, by command of the King, that the Duke ſhould be baniſhed during life five hundred miles from England, and that, on the King's demiſe, the next heir ſhould be conſtituted Regent, with kingly power, they deemed no expedient, but the abſolute excluſion of the Duke, worthy of attention. The patience and moderation of the King, which had ſtood a very ſevere trial, now ſeemed at laſt to forſake him; and before the Commons had time to paſs a ſingle bill, he ſuddenly and unexpectedly diſſolved the Parliament, with a full reſolution not to ſummon another, till the ſpirit and temper of the times had undergone an eſſential alteration. The popular party were ſtruck with conſternation at this vigorous procedure; and the nation, diſguſted with the obſtinacy of their repreſentatives, and pleaſed with the great conceſſions made by the King, joined in applauding the firmneſs and ſpirit with which he acted on this occaſion. The deſperate meaſures

afterwards

afterwards reſorted to by the patriots, the fatal cataſtrophe which enſued, and the tragical end of Sydney, Ruſſel, Eſſex, and others of the party, too plainly evinced the imprudence and folly of their preceding conduct; which indeed affords a memorable leſſon to poſterity, how ſolicitous men ought to be, who have great and laudable ends in view, to adopt rational and practicable methods of effecting them. The deſpotiſm exerciſed by Charles, from this period, was ſcarcely inferior to that of Henry VIII. though it is certain that, preſſed by pecuniary difficulties, and living in the continual dread of another revolution, his gaiety of ſpirit forſook him, and he became ſilent, abſent, and melancholy. It is generally believed, and with good reaſon, that he was meditating a change of meaſures, and that he had it in contemplation very ſhortly to ſummon another Parliament, from which very happy conſequences would probably have reſulted, when he was ſuddenly ſeized with a fit of apoplexy, and died February 6th, 1685, in the 55th year of his age, and 25th of his reign. Some remarkable circumſtances attending his death, have occaſioned a ſuſpicion of poiſon; and Burnet, who ſays of himſelf that no man was ever more inquiſitive, and he might have added credulous, ſeems to have given ſome credit to the report; but there does not appear any ſufficient ground for an accuſation of this atrocious nature. I ſhall only add, that this monarch, whoſe ſuperiority of underſtanding,

ſtanding, and quickneſs of penetration, were no leſs conſpicuous than his total want of virtue and of principle, might, with more propriety than almoſt any man, as the whole tenor of his conduct demonſtrates, adopt the declaration of the unhappy MEDEA:

"Video meliora proboq. deteriora ſequor."

ESSAY XVII.

On the CHARACTER *and* WRITINGS *of* ST. EVREMOND.

"RENOUNCE St. Evremond, and read St. Paul," ſays a celebrated Chriſtian Divine and Poet; but I am of opinion that St. Paul may be read to very good purpoſe, without renouncing St. Evremond. There are many authors who, without directly intending, or perhaps without being even conſcious of it, delineate in their writings the features of their own character in colours ſo lively, that it is impoſſible not to regard them with the ſame ſentiments of partiality or diſlike, as uſually reſult from a perſonal and intimate acquaintance. The character of St. Evremond, viewed through this medium, has always appeared to me in a light peculiarly intereſting and amiable; and the favourable impreſſion made by a peruſal of his Works, is confirmed by all the traditional and biographical accounts remaining of this accompliſhed Frenchman. He appears to have been a man of excellent capacity, intimately acquainted with the

world, and perfectly conversant with the secret springs of human conduct, and the genuine movements of the human heart. He was the man of fashion, the man of wit, and the man of pleasure; but as his love of pleasure was regulated by a refined taste and cultivated understanding, it never betrayed him into any disgraceful excesses; and he preserved his gaiety of heart and his vigour of intellect unimpaired to the age of ninety; passing his days in a delightful kind of philosophic indolence, not less beloved for the virtues of his heart than admired for the charms of his wit and conversation. His libertine principles respecting religion are well known. Educated in the bosom of the Romish Church, his superior discernment enabled him, with little effort, to emancipate himself from vulgar prejudices, and to reject without hesitation that enormous mass of absurdity and superstition which assumes the appellation of the catholic faith. Unhappily he appears, like the majority of infidels in Romish countries, to have taken it for granted that the doctrines of Popery were the genuine doctrines of Christianity, or, at least, they presume that Christianity must be in part chargeable with those absurdities, which so justly excite their ridicule and contempt, and therefore they think it superfluous to examine into the evidences of it.

With respect to the principles of natural religion, St. Evremond is far from denying their reality and importance; but he doubts, as every philosopher who

who is ingenuous and impartial muſt be conſtrained to do, of the ſtrength and ſufficiency of the evidence by which they are ſupported. " Jamais homme," ſays he, " n'a été bien perſuadé " par ſa raiſon ou que l'ame fut certainement im- " mortelle, ou qu'elle s'anéantit effectivement avec " le corps.—On ne doute point que Socrate n'ait " crû l'Immortalité de l'Ame; ſon hiſtoire le dit, & " les ſentiments que Platon attribuë ſemble nous " en aſſûrer. Mais Socrate ne nous en aſſûre pas " lui-meme; car quand il eſt devant ſes juges, il " en parle comme un homme qui la ſouhaite, & " traite l'Anéantiſſement comme un philoſophe " qui ne le craint point.——Qu'a fait Deſcartes " par ſa demonſtration prètenduë d'une ſubſtance " purement ſpirituelle, d'une ſubſtance qui doit " penſer éternellement? Qu'a-t'il fait par des Spé- " culations ſi épurées? Il a fait croire que la Reli- " gion ne le perſuadoit pas, ſans pouvoir perſuader " ni lui ni les autres par les Raiſons."

St. Evremond has been frequently ſtiled a ſuperficial writer, and his biographers, Sylveſtre and Des Maizeaux have given ſome countenance to the accuſation by their own acknowledgment.—" Il " n'avoit pas," ſay they, " un grand ſavoir—En " liſant il s'attachoit plus a etudier le genie, & le " caractere d'un Auteur qu'a charger ſa memoire " d'une erudition faſtueuſe & ſouvent inutile." I do not think there are any words by which mankind are more frequently deceived, than by the

terms ſuperficial and profound. Nothing can properly be ſtiled ſuperficial, which diſcovers juſt and comprehenſive views of a ſubject, though it may not ſuit the writer's purpoſe or inclination to compoſe an elaborate diſſertation, or to enter much into detail. On the other hand, many very voluminous, and what the world calls very profound treatiſes, have been written on various ſubjects, which to intelligent readers exhibit nothing more than the profound ignorance or abſurdity of the authors. Thus we abound in profound ſyſtems of ancient Mythology, profound criticiſms on ancient Poetry, profound reſearches into ancient Hiſtory, and profound commentaries upon ancient Metaphyſics. But writers of the claſs to which St. Evremond belongs, are not ſuperficial, though neceſſarily conciſe, from that ſuperiority of judgment and underſtanding, which will not ſuffer them to introduce what is foreign and inapplicable to the ſubject; and that juſtneſs of taſte and happy ſkill in the art of compoſition, which enables them to expreſs every ſentiment in the ſimpleſt and moſt perſpicuous language. His "Reflexions ſur les divers "genies du peuple Romains dans les divers tems "de la Republique," are written in the true ſpirit of philoſophy; they are bold, ſagacious, and juſt. I cannot but extremely regret, that through an unfortunate accident we are deprived of the ſeven chapters which comprized the important period, commencing at the Jugurthine war, and terminating

nating with the death of Julius Cæsar. His Moral Essays are highly pleasing, and abound with observations which discover uncommon genius and penetration; and his Criticisms are truly classical and judicious. In his Remarks upon Racine's Tragedy of Alexander the Great, he scruples not to place that elegant poet, whom he nevertheless applauds with warmth and feeling, far below the level of the great Corneille, a point at that time much contested, though the superiority of Corneille is at present universally acknowledged. M. de Corneille, conscious of the justice of his own claim, and gratified by the praises and suffrage of so distinguished a judge, wrote a complimentary letter upon the occasion to M. de St. Evremond; in which, with an excusable vanity, or rather a dignified pride, he expresses his firm assurance, that though his reputation suffered a temporary injury from the attacks of ignorance and detraction, he should receive from posterity complete and ample justice. "Vous m'honorez," says this celebrated genius, "de vôtre estime en un tems où il semble qu'il "y ait un parti fait pour ne m'en laisser aucune. "Vous me consolez glorieusement de la délicatesse "de nôtre siécle, quand vous daignez m'attribuer "le bon goût de l'antiquité. Je vous avoüe après "cela, que je pense avoir quelque droit de traiter de "ridicules ces vains trophées qu'on établit sur le "débris imaginaire des miens: & de regarder avec "pitié ces opiniâtres entêtements qu'on avoit "pour les anciens Héros refondus a notre mode."

The reply of St. Evremond is not a little remarkable "Je vous puis repondre que jamais réputa-" tion n'a été ſi bien établie que la vôtre en Ang-" leterre & en Hollande, Les Anglois aſſez diſ-" poſés naturellement à eſtimer ce qui leur appar-" tient renoncent à cette opinion ſouvent bien" fondée, & croyent faire honneur à leur Ben" Johnſon, de le nommer Le Corneille D'Ang-" leterre." Was Shakeſpeare, then, the boaſt and glory of the Drama; the ornament, not of England only, but the pride of all nature.—Was that mighty and tranſcendent genius regarded as of ſo little importance, that his name was not deemed worthy even of mention upon this occaſion? Was the cold, the formal, the pedantic Johnſon, to be ſingled out as the champion of our literary fame, to enter the liſts of genius againſt the illuſtrious Corneille?—The well known preference given by the nation in general, during a great part of the laſt century to Ben Johnſon, as well as his celebrated cotemporaries, Beaumont and Fletcher, with reſpect to a writer ſo prodigiouſly ſuperior, not only to them, but to every dramatic genius which the world ever ſaw, is a very curious literary phænomenon. We uſually ſatisfy ourſelves with attributing, in a general way, this remarkable error in judgment to the depravity of the reigning taſte. But the taſte and judgment of the public had certainly upon the whole made a conſiderable advance to maturity ſince the age of Elizabeth, when the Dramas of Shakeſpeare

ſpeare excited univerſal delight and admiration. Several reaſons might perhaps be aſſigned, if this were the proper place, which would, in ſome meaſure, account for this temporary preference ſo injurious to the reputation of Shakeſpeare, and ſo diſgraceful to the good ſenſe and diſcernment of the nation. As to St. Evremond, it may well be queſtioned whether he had even read the works of Shakeſpeare at the time this letter was written. He appears, indeed, notwithſtanding the compliments he occaſionally pays to the Engliſh nation, to have entertained no very high idea of Engliſh literature; and it muſt be acknowledged that France, at this brilliant period of the reign of Louis XIV. had made far greater advances in almoſt every department of taſte and literature than the ſurrounding nations, and that England, in particular, followed her with ſlow and unequal ſteps.

Notwithſtanding the favourable reception St. Evremond met with in this kingdom, and the flattering attention paid to him by perſons of the moſt diſtinguiſhed rank, he ſighed in ſecret at the recollection that he was a baniſhed man; and the great object of his life, for many years, was to obtain permiſſion to return to his beloved country. England, during almoſt the whole period of St. Evremond's reſidence here, was immerſed in politics. While the great queſtions of Liberty and Religion agitated the nation, both of which St. Evremond regarded with cold indifference, little leiſure, as well as inclination, remained for the cultivation of the fine arts, or the belles lettres;

and St. Evremond, amidſt the noiſe and fury of contending factions, languiſhed for the ſerenity, the elegance, and urbanity of Paris. At length, however, he ſeems to have reconciled himſelf, in a great meaſure, to the manners and diſpoſition of the people amongſt whom he had ſo long reſided; and when the royal permiſſion was at laſt granted to St. Evremond, after he had long ceaſed his ſolicitations, to end his days in his native land, he refuſed with becoming dignity to accept the offered pardon. He replied to the Comte de Grammont, through the medium of whom the pardon was notified, ſays M. de Maizeaux, "qu'il "étoit trop vieux pour ſe tranſplanter; que d'ailleurs il aimoit mieux reſter par choix à "Londres, ou il étoit connu de ce qu'il y avoit "d' honnêtes gens; où l'on étoit accoûtumé a ſa "loupe & à ſes cheveux blancs, à ſes manieres & "à ſon tour d'eſprit, que de retourner en France "où il avoit perdu toutes ſes habitudes; ou il "ſeroit comme etranger, & où à peine connoîtroît-il un autre courtiſan que le Comte de "Grammont, lui-même."

At this time the Revolution had taken place, and St. Evremond was high in favour with the new King, William III. whom he appears to have regarded, not very conſiſtently indeed with the ideas of government which occaſionally emerge in his writings, with the utmoſt eſteem and admiration. The applauſe he laviſhes upon that great Monarch might well paſs for flattery, had he been equally prodigal of praiſe in the former reigns; but as his

reſerve

reſerve in that reſpect, notwithſtanding his perſonal obligations, is remarkable, there is little reaſon to doubt, that with ſome allowance for poetical and courtly embelliſhment, he ſpake the genuine ſentiments of his heart. The heroic and magnanimous qualities of that Prince, and that ſucceſſion of great, uſeful, and memorable actions which diſtinguiſhed his life, could not fail, in the eſtimation of a man ſo capable of diſcriminating as St. Evremond, totally to eclipſe the dazzling and deluſive ſplendors of the character of Louis XIV. whoſe "glaring orb" had now paſſed its meridian height.

From the various eulogiums upon our immortal Hero, to be met with in the works of St. Evremond, I ſhall ſelect the following, as a compliment, equelly elegant and juſt—"Don Antonio "de Cordoue diſoit qu'il eſt difficile de trouver "un grand Héros: un grand Héros, & un bon "Roi enſemble preſque impoſſible: un grand Hé- "ros, un bon Roi, & un honnête homme; c'eſt "ce qu'on n'avoit jamais vû, & ce qu'on ne ver- "roit jamais.

"Vous n'aviez pas le don de prophetie
"Quand vous fites ce jugement;
"Antonio, ſi vous etiez en vie
"Vous changeriez de ſentiment;
"Antonio, ces talens diſperſés
"Sont dans le Roi malgre vous ramaſſés
"On reconnoît, ſans beſoin qu'on le nomme
"Le grand Héros, le bon Roi, l'honnête homme."

Of

Of the poetry of St. Evremond, in which term I mean to include his dramatic pieces, it may in general be affirmed, that it does not exceed the *mediocre.* It was never eſteemed excellent by the French themſelves, and it is now ſinking faſt into oblivion. In a word, his poetical effuſions are the productions, to uſe the language of his biographers, " d'un homme du monde qui dans " une grand oiſivété cherche a paſſer agrèable- " ment le tems—d'un bel eſprit qui penſe a ſe di- " vertir." And though he appears to have written in verſe, as well as proſe, with great eaſe and facility, the utmoſt to which he ever attains, or perhaps aſpires, is elegance, and this only in trifles; for his more elaborate pieces are as devoid of the graces of compoſition as of the charms of imagination and genius.

I have intimated that the opinions of St. Evremond, relative to Government, were not very liberal, or perhaps very conſiſtent. The principles of Mr. Locke, now ſo univerſally received, and deemed almoſt ſelf-evident, were at that time regarded as the novel and dangerous ſpeculations of a bold and viſionary writer; though the ſubject ſeems not to have excited much of St. Evremond's attention, who never was ſo far naturalized as to adopt the feelings and ſentiments of an Engliſhman. His ideas of religious toleration alſo appear to have been miſerably contracted and erroneous. " Une des premieres ſageſſes," he tells his friend, M. Juſtel, " & des plus commandées, " c'eſt

" c'eſt de reſpecter en tout pays la Religion du " Prince: condamner la créance du Souverain, " c'eſt condamner le Souverain en même tems. " Un Catholique Anglois, qui dans ſes diſcours, " ou dans ſes ecrits donne le nom d'hereſie a la " Religion Anglicane, traite le Roi d'Angleterre " d'heretique & lui fait une inſulte dans ſes pro- " pres etats : un Huguenot en France qui traite la " Religion Catholique d'Idolatrie, accuſe le Roi " par une conſequence néceſſaire d'etre Idolatre, ce " que les Empereurs payens même n'ont pû " ſouffrir. Voulez-vous me croire Monſieur joü- " iſſez paiſiblement de l'exerciſe qu'on vous per- " met, tel qu'il puiſſe étre ; & ſoyez perſuadé que " les Princes ont autant de droit ſur l'extérieur de " la Religion, qu'en ont les ſujets ſur le fond ſe- " cret de leur conſcience." Such are the ſentiments of the celebrated M. de St. Evremond upon the ſubject of Toleration. It is ſtrange that a man, who could reaſon upon other topics with ſuch acuteneſs and preciſion, ſhould need to be told, that as Nature diſtributes her gifts with an impartial hand, and the intellectual powers of Princes are not ſuperior to thoſe of their ſubjects, they are not in any reſpect better qualified for the inveſtigation and diſcovery of truth. That whatever the private ſentiments of the Prince may be, to oppoſe thoſe ſentiments by force, not of arms, but of argument, can never be juſtly conſtrued into criminal diſobedience to his authority. The moſt enlightened and moſt virtuous citizens have exerciſed this

this privilege without any impeachment of their faith and loyalty; and the wiſeſt and moſt magnanimous Princes have been moſt ready to acknowledge the advantages which muſt reſult from this freedom of diſcuſſion.

The right which M. de St. Evremond thinks it ſufficient to contend for, "Le droit que les ſujets "ont ſur le fond ſecret de leur conſcience," is ſuch a right as the moſt abject ſlave cannot be diveſted of under the yoke of even oriental deſpotiſm: and the right which M. de St. Evremond is ſo ready to reſign, "Sur l'exterieur de la Reli-"gion," is all that the Inquiſition itſelf has ever dared to uſurp. It is ſo obvious a truth, that it is wonderful men entruſted with the government of men ſhould need to be reminded of it, that mankind are, and ever will be, actuated by motives which reſpect their happineſs in a future as well as in the preſent ſtate of exiſtence. The doctrine of a future ſtate, if men are not wholly ſunk in ignorance and barbariſm, muſt always be received as true, or as probable at leaſt, by a great proportion of mankind. Now the great, and indeed the only proper object of temporal authority, is *temporal* proſperity; and men ought, upon every ground of reaſon and policy, to be permitted to ſecure their *future* happineſs by ſuch means as ſhall appear to them moſt effectual; and as amongſt different claſſes of men a variety of opinions will inevitably prevail, as to the efficacy of different modes of faith and forms of worſhip, and theſe opinions will

will be ſupported with all the fervor of religious zeal, perhaps of fanatic enthuſiaſm, what but an exceſs of pride and folly approaching to infatuation can lead any Government to attempt, as Milton expreſſes it, "to bind Conſcience in ſecular "chains," or to enjoin or expect uniformity of conduct or profeſſion, when diverſity of ſentiment, if Reaſon is not wholly diſcarded, is abſolutely unavoidable. Before the will of the Sovereign, or of the State, in a caſe of this nature, can be implicitly ſubmitted to, a univerſal torpor of the mental faculties muſt take place, and the human mind muſt be reduced to the moſt abject ſtate of humiliation and debaſement: or if, on the other hand, men ſhould ever become ſenſible of the injuſtice and preſumption of this claim, and the Sovereign, prompted by that pride, obſtinacy, and folly, which are ſo frequently the concomitants of power, ſhould reſolve, at every hazard, to enforce it, all hiſtory demonſtrates what civil diſcord, what perſecution, what furious and bloody commotions, may be expected to enſue.

Toleration is a ſimple, eaſy, and effectual remedy for the prevention or removal of theſe "dire diſtreſſes."—Religion, it can never be repeated too often, is a perſonal thing.—No man, indeed, ought to be allowed to injure another under pretence of conſcience; but, with this ſole exception, every individual has an inherent right, and it is the moſt heinous of all oppreſſions to deprive him of the right, of ſecuring and advancing

advancing his future happineſs by ſuch methods as ſhall to him appear moſt conducive to the accompliſhment of that purpoſe: but I am in danger of digreſſing too far from my ſubject. I ſhall now conclude theſe deſultory obſervations by explaining in a few words the cauſe of St. Evremond's long baniſhment, as it is the moſt remarkable event of his life, and in itſelf a curious piece of ſecret hiſtory. About the year 1658, M. de St. Evremond had the misfortune to incur the diſpleaſure of Cardinal Mazarine, by ſome free things ſpoken of his Eminence in the warmth and confidence of private converſation, at the table of the Duke de Candale, which were maliciouſly reported to the Cardinal, probably with ſome aggravation. Upon which St. Evremond was ſent as a ſtate priſoner to the Baſtile, where he was detained ſeveral months: on being releaſed, he thought it expedient to wait upon the Miniſter to return him thanks for his enlargement. Cardinal Mazarine told him that he was convinced of his innocence, and concerned for the inconvenience he had ſuffered; but that a man in his ſituation, who was obliged to liſten to ſo many reports, often found it difficult to diſtinguiſh truth from falſhood, and not to do injuſtice ſometimes to an honeſt man.

With this apology St. Evremond was obliged to appear ſatisfied, but he retained in his boſom a deep reſentment of the Cardinal's treatment; and in the following year he found an opportunity of gratifying his ſpleen very much at the expence,

expence, as in the event it proved, of his own peace and happineſs. The famous treaty of the Pyrenees was negotiated by Cardinal Mazarine and Don Louis de Haro in perſon. Amongſt other courtiers and men of diſtinction St. Evremond was preſent during the conferences, and when the peace was ſigned, he wrote his ſentiments upon it in a confidential letter to the Marquis de Crequi, in which he points his moſt acrimonious ſhafts of ridicule and ſatire againſt the Cardinal. The fact was, that Mazarine, ſwayed by intereſted motives, ardently wiſhed to put an end to the war, and that the Spaniſh Miniſter, taking advantage of his impatience, had obtained far better terms than could reaſonably be hoped from the debilitated and ruinous condition of the Spaniſh Monarchy. St. Evremond tells us that as ſoon as the peace was ſigned, Don Louis exclaimed, "Allons, Meſſieurs, "allons, rendre graces à Dieu; nous etions perdus, "L'Eſpagne eſt ſauvée." "Que le bon homme Don "Louis," continues St. Evremond, "n'ait eu pour "but que le ſervice de ſon maître, & l'utilité du public, la maxime de M. le Cardinal eſt, que le Miniſtre doit etre moins à l'etat, que l'etat au Miniſtre; & dans cette penſée pour peu que Dieu "lui donne de jours il fera ſon propre bien de celui "de tout le Roiaume."

This letter, which for the ſecurity and ſatisfaction of the writer was returned by the Marquis de Crequi to M. de St. Evremond, remained a profound ſecret during the life of the Cardinal. The demiſe

demiſe of Mazarine, which happened in the year 1660, was immediately followed by the diſgrace of M. Fouquet: in conſequence of which event not only the papers of that Miniſter were ſeized, but the cabinets of his moſt confidential friends were examined by an order from the Crown. Unfortunately at this critical time St. Evremond happened to be on a tour to ſome diſtant province, and in order to "make aſſurance double ſure, and take a "bond of fate," he had, previous to his departure from Paris, depoſited this letter, amongſt other papers of value, with a friend, who was, as the demon of ill luck would have it, one of the confidential intimates of M. Fouquet, and thus the fatal diſcovery was made. St. Evremond, terrified with the idea of returning to his old apartments in the Baſtile, on receiving this unwelcome intelligence, made his eſcape into Holland, from whence he ſoon paſſed into England, where he reſided, with ſhort intervals, the remainder of his life, which, as I have already mentioned, was extended to a very advanced age.—He died September 20, 1703, and was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey.

He has delineated his own portrait with an agreeable vanity.—The reſemblance muſt be acknowledged ſtriking, though I will not pretend to deny that it is a flattering likeneſs. He deſcribes himſelf as "Un philoſophe également éloigné du "ſuperſtitieux & de l'impie. Il ſe loüe de la Na- "ture; il ne ſe plaint point de la fortune. Il hait "le crime, il ſouffre les fautes, il plaint le mal-

"heur.

" heur. Il ne s'attache point aux Ecrits les plus " ſavans pour aquerir la ſcience; mais aux plus " ſenſés pour fortifier ſa raiſon. En amitié plus " conſtant qu'un philoſophe; a l'egard de la Re- " ligion,

" De Juſtice & de Charité,
" Beaucoup plus que de Pénitence,
" Il compoſe ſa Pieté:
" Mettant en Dieu ſa confiance,
" Eſperant tout de ſa bonté
" Dans le ſein de la Providence,
" Il trouve ſon Repos, & ſa Felicité."

ESSAY XVIII.

STRICTURES *on* WALPOLE'S CATALOGUE *of* ROYAL *and* NOBLE AUTHORS.

THERE are two extremes equally remote from juſtneſs of thinking, the Scylla and Charybdis of literature, which men of ſenſe ſhould be equally ſolicitous to avoid. The firſt is a tame acquieſcence in vulgar opinion, the ſecond a vain affectation of ſingularity. Of the firſt extreme it muſt be allowed, that the elegant writer upon whom I ſhall now take the liberty to offer a few critical remarks, has ſteered perfectly clear; but as to the ſecond, I do not think him quite ſo ſucceſsful. His "Hiſtoric Doubts" afford an egregious inſtance of falſe refinement and affected ſingularity. It is really amuſing to ſee a writer, in the midſt of all his parade of philoſophical and hiſtorical ſcepticiſm, become the dupe of an impoſture, by which, even that dark and credulous age in which it originated, and which was ſo favourable to its ſucceſs, could not be long or generally deceived.—His ingenuity and acuteneſs only ſerve to fortify him in error. Mr. Walpole

Walpole appears to me to have been miſled, by conſidering the caſe of Perkin Warbeck as ſimilar to that of the late Pretender, the legitimacy of whoſe birth was called in queſtion by the prevailing faction at the æra of the Revolution, without reflecting upon the great diſparity of evidence attending the two caſes; the legitimacy of the one, and the illegitimacy of the other, reſting entirely upon improbable ſurmiſe and confident aſſertion. There are many obſervations in the volume now lying before me, which appear to me to have a conſiderable tincture of that fanciful and affected turn of thinking, which ſo remarkably predominates in the work I have already mentioned. The firſt article of the Catalogue may be cited as an inſtance.

Mr. Walpole, in contradiction to all the accounts remaining of Richard I. is unwilling to admit that celebrated Monarch to have been either a poet, or a lover of poeſy; and becauſe Roger Hoveden, the Monk, impudently and ridiculouſly aſſerts that Richard, to raiſe himſelf a name, bought and begged verſes, and drew over ſingers and jeſters from France, to chant panegyrics on him about the ſtreets, Mr. Walpole thinks that no dependence is to be placed upon thoſe accounts which repreſent him as deeply enamoured of the Muſes, or, to uſe Mr. Walpole's own words, "as the ſoft lute-loving hero of poeſy." Certainly, after the great exploits

which this romantic and victorious Monarch performed in Paleſtine, there was little occaſion for him to buy or to beg verſes, in order to raiſe himſelf a name. There is no contrariety, as Mr. Walpole ſeems to inſinuate, between the warlike genius of *Cœur-de-Lion*, and his attachment to "the gay ſcience of the Pro-"vencales;" his military ardour would be inflamed by his poetical enthuſiaſm, and he would appear in the eyes of his co-temporaries, no leſs the hero ſurrounded by his minſtrels in the feſtive bower, or high-arched hall, than in the tented field, or the enſanguined plain. Sometimes, doubtleſs,

"The ſounding ſtrings
"Would breathe of high immortal things:"

and ſometimes,

"Cupid would tune the Muſe's lyre,
"To languid notes of ſoft deſire:"

and theſe occupations, which appear to Mr. Walpole ſo inconſiſtent with the ambitious and reſtleſs ſpirit of Richard, were, however, perfectly conformable to the gallant and romantic genius of the ages of chivalry.

Of Lord Cobham Mr. Walpole obſerves that "he "was a man whoſe virtues made him a reformer, "whoſe valour a martyr, whoſe martyrdom an "enthuſiaſt." That his enthuſiaſm ſhould make him a martyr, would excite but little wonder; but that his martyrdom ſhould make him an enthuſiaſt,

enthuſiaſt, muſt be allowed to be no very common caſe. "The King, Henry V. was perſuaded to undertake the conqueſt of France, "to which kingdom they aſſured him he had "an undoubted right. When he thought he "had any to the Crown of England, the "other followed of courſe." It ſeems to me, however, that the claim of his father, Henry IV. to the Crown of England, was exactly of the ſame nature with that of William III. which we are not accuſtomed to treat with quite ſo much contempt.

Of the character of Lord Rivers, Mr. Walpole gives us an amuſing and agreeable ſketch. "It "is remarkable," ſays he, "how ſlightly the "death of this nobleman is always mentioned, "and how much we dwell on the execution "of the Lord Chamberlain Haſtings, a man in "every light his inferior. In truth, the gene-"rality draw their ideas of Engliſh Hiſtory "from the tragic, rather than the hiſtoric Au-"thors." But I preſume Sir Thomas More did not draw his ideas of the reign of Richard III. from the tragic Authors, and yet he dwells upon the execution of Lord Haſtings as an event of very great importance. The truth is, that Lord Haſtings, notwithſtanding the inferiority of his mental and corporeal accompliſhments, filled a much greater ſpace, in the eye of the nation, than Lord Rivers; and the circumſtances attending his death are in themſelves

much more remarkable, and make almoſt every villainy which is reported or ſurmiſed of Richard III. perfectly credible.

The unfortunate Earl of Eſſex furniſhes one of the moſt entertaining articles in the Catalogue. I am happy to agree with Mr. Walpole in the high ideas he appears to entertain of the character and government of Queen Elizabeth; nor am I diſpleaſed at the expoſure of her foibles, if accompanied with a proper ſenſe and acknowledgment of her many great and admirable qualities and virtues. I do not, however, deem quite ſo highly as Mr. Walpole of her great and unfortunate favorite. The Earl of Eſſex was doubtleſs a man of great natural parts; but, intoxicated with royal favour and popular applauſe, he was guilty of abſurdities and extravagancies, which would have diſgraced any man who had pretenſions to common ſenſe. The laſt fatal enterprize in which he was engaged, was an aſtoniſhing proof to what deſperate extremities his pride and paſſion were capable of tranſporting him. He was poſſeſſed of all thoſe ſplendid and deluſive qualities which are calculated to captivate the populace; but the Queen's partiality for him did not prevent her from diſcerning the danger to be apprehended from ſo turbulent and ungovernable a ſpirit; and if he really declared that his life was inconſiſtent with the Queen's ſafety, it is probable that the Queen and her miniſters were as good judges of the truth

truth of the declaration as even Mr. Walpole. "How was he dangerous, or could he be?" Mr. W. aſks;—"His wild attempt on the city "had demonſtrated his impotence." This is certainly a curious and perfectly novel mode of vindication. A man who has committed one act of political frenzy, may eaſily be ſuppoſed capable of another; and the failure of one treaſonable attempt, does not quite amount to a demonſtration that no danger is to be apprehended from the next.

It is very extraordinary that Mr. Walpole, who ſpeaks of the Earl of Eſſex in terms of unbounded applauſe, ſhould find ſo little to admire in Sir Philip Sydney, who poſſeſſed all the amiable and ſplendid qualities of the Earl of Eſſex, without any mixture of his extravagance. "No man," ſays Mr. Walpole, "ſeems to me ſo aſtoniſhing an object of temporary "admiration, as the celebrated Sir P. Sydney. "The learned of Europe dedicated their works "to him: the Republic of Poland thought him "at leaſt worthy to be in the nomination for "their Crown. All the Muſes of England wept "his death. When we at this diſtance of time "enquire what prodigious merits excited ſuch "admiration, what do we find? Great valour. "But it was an age of heroes. In full of all "other talents, we have a tedious, lamentable, "pedantic, paſtoral Romance; and ſome ab-"ſurd attempts to fetter Engliſh verſe in Ro-"man chains."——"He died with the raſh-

" neſs of a volunteer, after having lived to " write with the *ſangfroid* and prolixity of Ma- " demoiſelle Scuderi." This is writing, it muſt be owned, with a very faſhionable air, if not of *ſangfroid*, at leaſt of *non-chalance*. But the character of the gallant, the all-accompliſhed Sydney, the flower of chivalry, and the mirror of knighthood, wants no aſſiſtance to repel ſo weak and wanton an attack. While France continues to boaſt her illuſtrious Bayard, " Le Chevalier ſans peur & ſans reproche," England will not fail to celebrate the heroic virtues of Sydney. Surely Mr. Walpole might have known, without being at the trouble of a very profound inveſtigation, that, in an age which he allows to have been an age of heroes, valour alone could not have elevated Sir P. Sydney to ſuch a diſtinguiſhed height of reputation. If the learned of Europe dedicated their works to him, if the Republic of Poland thought him worthy to be put in nomination for their Crown, if all the Muſes of England wept his death, if ſo valorous a knight as Sir Fulke Greville thought it ſufficient honour to have it recorded on his tomb that he was the friend of Sir P. Sidney, Mr. Walpole might ſafely conclude, that his character was diſtinguiſhed by far other qualities than mere valour. The truth is, that if we form our ideas of him from the accounts and repreſentations of his co-temporaries, his character will appear " ſo perfect and ſo peerleſs," that

that it may well be ſuppoſed "created of every "creature's beſt." As, however, it is certain, that the imperfection of human nature will not allow the ſame individual to excel in all things, I readily admit that the Arcadia is not quite equal, as a literary compoſition, to the "Nou-"velle Heloiſe," and that the hexameters of Sydney are far inferior to the Iambics of Pope. It muſt be acknowledged alſo, that at the battle of Zutphen he glorioufly offended againſt the laws of what Falſtaff calls "the better part of valour; "diſcretion." So did the famous Gaſton de Foix, at Ravenna; ſo did William III. at Seneffe; yet ſuch faults have not been thought to derogate from their character as heroes.

"Haud ignarus eram quantum nova gloria in armis
"Et prœdulce decus primo certamine poſſet."

Such, with reſpect to a ſimilar offence, is the language of a poet whom Mr. Walpole will not accuſe of writing with the *ſangfroid* of a Scuderi. The obſervations which conclude this article, reſpecting the Chorus of the ancient Drama, do honour to Mr. Walpole's good ſenſe and critical ſagacity.

There is an haſty remark in the entertaining account which Mr. Walpole gives us of Lord Brooke, which requires animadverſion. His Lordſhip, in the year 1641, publiſhed "a Diſcourſe on Epiſcopacy;" in which, Anthony Wood tells us, he was aſſiſted by ſomepuritanical miniſters: "But Milton," ſays Mr. Walpole

Walpole, "commends it for breathing the ſpirit of "toleration, which was not the ſpirit of the Pu-"ritans." Now it is moſt certain, that the principles of toleration originated with the Puritans, and with the moſt rigid and enthuſiaſtic ſect of Puritans, with which ſect Milton was himſelf connected: ſo that the aſſertion of Wood is by no means invalidated by the obſervation of Mr. Walpole. "Of all the Chriſtian ſects," ſays Mr. Hume, "this "was the firſt, which, during its proſperity, as "well as its adverſity, always adopted the prin-"ciple of toleration; and it is remarkable, that "ſo reaſonable a doctrine owed its origin, not "to reaſoning, but to the height of extrava-"gance and fanaticiſm."

In treating of the famous Earl of Glamorgan, Mr. Walpole offers a very courtly, though not a very ſatisfactory, vindication of the commiſſion given by Charles I. to that nobleman, for bringing over a body of Iriſh Papiſts, during the civil wars. After the horrid devaſtations committed by thoſe miſcreants in Ireland, in the year 1641, no Monarch, who had any ſenſe of generoſity, or any regard to the common rights of humanity, would have had recourſe to ſo ſhocking an expedient for retrieving his affairs; nor, indeed, were the King's affairs at that time in ſo deſperate a ſituation as to call for ſo deſperate a remedy. Mr. Walpole thinks Charles to be pitied, becauſe few men in his ſituation would have acted better: On the

the contrary, I believe few men in his ſituation would have acted worſe. But "could a Monarch, "who had ſtretched every ſtring of prerogative, "conſent," aſks Mr. Walpole, "with a good "grace, to let it be curtailed?" No, certainly he could not: but it is a poor apology in behalf of a Sovereign who firſt tyrannizes over, and when provoked by reſiſtance, "lets looſe the dogs of war" upon his ſubjects, to ſay that it was not poſſible for him to recede with *a good grace*. But I am far from being inclined to become the champion of either party, during the courſe of theſe civil diſſentions; and this is not the place to enter into a diſcuſſion of their reſpective merits.

Mr. Walpole's remarks on the character and conduct of the Earl of Sandwich are ſomewhat curious. "His perſuading Cromwell to take the "Crown," ſays Mr. Walpole, "was an unac-"countable infatuation; eſpecially as his Lord-"ſhip was ſo zealous afterwards for the Reſtora-"tion." I ſhould rather think, that Cromwell's refuſal of the Crown, was an unaccountable infatuation. Whoever takes the trouble to read the conference between Cromwell, and the Committee deputed by Parliament to make the offer of the Crown, will do more juſtice to the arguments made uſe of upon that memorable occaſion, than to repreſent them as the reſult of an unaccountable infatuation. I ſee no inconſiſtency in his Lordſhip's being afterwards zealous for the Reſtoration. In conſequence of the

confuſion

confuſion and anarchy which took place after the death of Cromwell, men of ſenſe and reflection were in general convinced that a permanent ſettlement could be effected only by the reſtoration of the baniſhed family. "It ſeems," ſays Mr. Walpole, "that the Earl had a fond and "inexplicable paſſion for Royalty, though he "had early acted againſt Charles I." It may be preſumed, that the Earl was far from being ſingular in retaining his affection for a Monarchical form of Government, even when actually engaged in oppoſing, by force of arms, the tyrannical deſigns of the reigning Monarch. "The Earl admired Cromwell; yet, could he "imagine that in any light a diadem would "raiſe the Protector's character? or how could "a man, who thought Cromwell deſerved a "Crown, think that Charles II. deſerved one?" Theſe queſtions admit of an obvious reply.—A diadem could not, perhaps, raiſe the perſonal character of the Protector, but it might contribute to fix his power upon a more ſolid and permanent baſis. And it does not appear that the Earl was ſo much miſtaken in his judgment as to ſuppoſe that either Cromwell or Charles deſerved a Crown;—but he might nevertheleſs think, that he conſulted the true intereſt of his country, in different political ſituations, in endeavouring to advance both the one and the other to the poſſeſſion of a Crown. "It is often "urged," ſays Mr. Walpole, "with great emphaſis,

"that,

"that, when a nation has been accuſtomed for "ages to ſome particular form of government, "it will, though that form of government may "be changed for a time, always revert to it; "No argument," continues Mr. Walpole, "ſeems "to me to have leſs ſolidity; for, unleſs the cli- "mate, the air, and the ſoil of the country, can "imbibe habits of government, or infuſe them, "no country can in reality have been accuſ- "tomed to any ſort of government, but during "the lives of its actual inhabitants." This argument, or this political axiom, rather, which appears to Mr. Walpole ſo deſtitute of ſolidity, ſeems to me perfectly juſt; and Mr. Walpole's obſervations upon it, I think, extremely unphiloſophical and inconcluſive. I never knew any one ſilly enough to ſuppoſe that the climate, air, and ſoil of a country, could either imbibe or infuſe habits of government; but I imagine that Mr. Walpole will not care to deny, that ideas of government and modes of thinking, may be infuſed by education; that opinions are uſually imbibed at a very early period of life, and that they are in general much leſs the reſult of reaſon than of prejudice: if, then, a ſtrong prepoſſeſſion has prevailed in any country in favour of Monarchy, or of any other particular form of government, notwithſtanding that by ſome violent revolution the form of government may be changed, the prepoſſeſſion will remain; and a propenſity

propenſity to revert to this particular form will certainly be apparent, long after the race of men by whom, or in whoſe days, this revolution was effected, has ceaſed to exiſt. It is even not improbable, that thoſe very individuals who concurred in this change of government, when any new cauſes of diſſatisfaction ariſe, may feel a revival of their original attachments, and condemn with warmth their own precipitation and folly in aſſiſting to effect a total change of government, when the public happineſs might have been as effectually ſecured at a leſs expence, by a correction of abuſes; and in this ſtate of mind they will gladly riſque their lives to ſubvert, what they before riſqued their lives to eſtabliſh. All hiſtory furniſhes abundant inſtances of the truth of theſe remarks; and the memorable revolution of 1688, in this country, is itſelf a ſtriking proof how ſlowly and reluctantly the majority acquieſce in political innovations, though the alteration then effected amounted to far leſs than a radical change of conſtitution, and it was juſtified by the moſt urgent motives of ſtate neceſſity.

"Were men," aſks Mr. Walpole, "born late in "the reign of Charles I. bred to entertain irradi- "cable prejudices in favour of Royalty?" To this queſtion I anſwer, that men born late in the reign of Charles I. were as likely to entertain prejudices in favour of monarchy, as men born at any other time.—It is well known that the mur-

der-

der of the King was effected by the leaders of the army, inflamed by a ſpirit of religious fanaticiſm, as well as political frenzy, and that the Parliament never gave the public ſanction to that act, which was regarded with horror and execration by a great majority of the nation.—"It is ſuppoſed," ſays Mr. Walpole, "that no "country is ſo naturally propenſe to liberty as "England. Is it naturally propenſe to monar-"chy too?" By being naturally propenſe to liberty Mr. Walpole probably means, that no country has ſhewn ſo ſtrong and durable an attachment to liberty as England; which I believe is true as to modern nations: but I know not why that ſhould be thought inconſiſtent with its being "naturally "propenſe," as Mr. Walpole ſtiles it, or ſtrongly attached to monarchy too. "Is monarchy the "natural vehicle of liberty?" Mr. Walpole aſks. It is difficult to give an anſwer to a queſtion ſo quaintly worded. Whether monarchy is the natural vehicle of liberty I will not venture to decide; becauſe I am not certain that I underſtand the queſtion. But I aſſert, without the leaſt heſitation, that liberty is beſt ſecured under a monarchical form of government; and I appeal to the admirable treatiſe of M. De Lolme, for the moſt ſatisfactory demonſtration of this great truth; and this I believe has long been a prevailing opinion in this country, though Mr. Walpole ſeems to repreſent it as a ſort of contradiction in terms.

Upon

Upon that celebrated couple, the Duke and Ducheſs of Newcaſtle, I think Mr. Walpole has been unreaſonably ſevere. A ſlight inſpection of her duſty and worm-eaten *tomes*, will convince any impartial judge that the Ducheſs, notwithſtanding her conceit and pedantry, was a woman of parts and genius. Of her poetical powers, the 69th Paper of the Connoiſſeur exhibits no unfavourable ſpecimen. There is ſomething offenſive in the reflections caſt upon the Duke and his noble co-temporary, the Marquis of Wincheſter, who, with a romantic generoſity and inflexible loyalty, expended their immenſe fortunes in ſupport of their Sovereign in his diſtreſs; and when reduced to poverty and diſtreſs themſelves, ſought for conſolation in literary amuſements. Notwithſtanding Mr. Walpole's diſdain, it was certainly a proof of admirable equanimity, or rather magnanimity, when they found their utmoſt efforts in the cauſe of Royalty unavailable, to be able to accommodate their minds to what Mr. W. ſtiles "the idleneſſes of literature." Nor were the literary productions of theſe celebrated Noblemen conſidered in their own age as by any means contemptible. If the Duke of Buckingham is applauded as the author of the Rehearſal, why is the Duke of Newcaſtle exhibited as a ſubject of ridicule, for writing "The Humorous Lovers," or "The Triumphant Widow?"

Of Mr. Walpole's ſhort account of the famous Earl of Shafteſbury, much is exceptionable.

Mr.

Mr. Walpole relates, upon the authority of Biſhop Burnet, a ridiculous ſtory of Shafteſbury's pretending that Cromwell offered to make him King. "If he did," ſays Mr. Walpole, "it only proves "that Cromwell took him for a fool." But if Cromwell took Shafteſbury for a fool, it only proves that Cromwell made a moſt egregious blunder. The abilities of Cromwell do not appear to me to riſe much above the common ſtandard. His military talents, ſeconded by the moſt daring reſolution, and unprincipled ambition, were the true cauſes of his wonderful ſucceſs; and Fairfax and Monk, had they been equally deſtitute of honour and probity, might have riſen to the ſame height of power: but the abilities of Lord Shafteſbury were certainly of the firſt claſs, far above the reach of Burnet's comprehenſion. "He "had a particular talent," ſays the Right Reverend Hiſtorian, "to make others truſt to his judgment, "and depend upon it; but he had a rambling way "of talking, and underſtood nothing to the bot-"tom. Nevertheleſs, he had a wonderful faculty "in ſpeaking to a popular aſſembly, and brought "over ſo many to a ſubmiſſion to his opinion, "that no man was ever known equal to him in the "art of governing parties, and making himſelf the "head of them." It ſhould ſeem that the learned Prelate conſidered the commanding genius of this great demagogue as ſomewhat a-kin to conjuration. He ſeems as much at a loſs to account for the aſcendancy which Shafteſbury acquired over the

perſons with whom he was connected, as the judges of the famous Leonora de Galigai, wife of Marſhal D'Ancre, who at her trial was interrogated by what magical powers ſhe had gained ſo abſolute an influence over the mind of Mary of Medicis, her royal miſtreſs; to which ſhe nobly replied, that ſhe uſed no other powers than thoſe which a ſtrong mind naturally poſſeſſes over a weak one. When the portrait of ſo great a man as Lord Shafteſbury is delineated by ſo wretched a dauber as Burnet, we may expect to find it what in fact it is, miſerably defective in drawing, colouring, and reſemblance.

Mr. Walpole enters more at large into the character of the Earl of Angleſey, Lord Privy Seal, though a much leſs remarkable perſonage; the acrimony with which Mr. Walpole attacks this nobleman, ſeems to me void of any juſt foundation. Biſhop Burnet, indeed, in his groſs and brutal manner, affirms, "that he ſtuck at nothing, and "was aſhamed of nothing; that he was neither "loved nor truſted by any man nor any ſide; that "he ſeemed to have no regard to common decen-"cies; that he ſold himſelf ſo often, that at laſt the "price fell ſo low that he grew uſeleſs." This character, though ſo oppoſite to the whole tenor of the Earl's life and conduct, ſeems to have been received by Mr. Walpole with implicit credulity. In anſwer to the Biſhop's charge, that he was neither loved nor truſted, the authors of the Biographia Britannica juſtly obſerve, that he enjoyed the confidence

fidence of King Charles II. for more than twenty years. Mr. Walpole is pleaſed to deny the fact; but certainly the aſſertion of the Biographia is true in that ſenſe, which is moſt honourable for the Earl's reputation. He was not, indeed, admitted to that degree of confidence which Shafteſbury, Buckingham, and Arlington once enjoyed; but if he had not poſſeſſed a conſiderable ſhare of the King's eſteem and regard, it is abſurd to ſuppoſe that he would have retained his high offices for ſo long a period. Nor does it appear that he forfeited his reputation with the patriotic party; for I do not recollect any parliamentary complaints againſt the Lord Privy Seal, during the whole reign of Charles II. or any impeachment of his public conduct; and his diſgrace was at laſt occaſioned by a too zealous vindication of himſelf from an imputation which related to his conduct when Commiſſioner in Ireland, thirty years before. "But," ſays Mr. Walpole, "if the fact were "true, it would be no juſtification."—No juſtification! then the apologiſts of the Earl are engaged in a hopeleſs attempt indeed. His being truſted by the King for twenty years, is not indeed a juſtification from all the accuſations which falſhood and malice may invent, but it certainly is a complete juſtification from that charge, which ſtigmatizes him as a man whom no one would truſt. As to the infamous accuſation of "ſelling himſelf ſo "often that the price fell ſo low that he at laſt "grew uſeleſs," it is ſo deſtitute of common ſenſe and common decency, that it can only be con-

ſidered as a proof that the Right Reverend Hiſtorian, to uſe his own words, "ſtuck at nothing, "and was aſhamed of nothing," which contributed to gratify his own malignant diſpoſition. Of Burnet it may be truly ſaid, that "his tongue "out-venoms all the worms of Nile."

Mr. Walpole mentions an idle report, that Lord Angleſey, had he lived, would have been raiſed to the dignity of Chancellor, by James II. but a man who had the courage to oppoſe, almoſt alone, the bill of attainder againſt the Duke of Monmouth, was not likely, ſurely, to receive ſo ſignal a mark of royal favour. Mr. Walpole next charges the Earl with ſervile complaiſance, and glaring injuſtice, for ſitting in judgment upon the rigicides. "The Earl had gone moſt lengths with "thoſe men; in ſhort, had acted with them in "open rebellion to his Sovereign. The putting to "death that Sovereign, could by no means be the "guilty part of their oppoſition. If a King deſerves "to be oppoſed by force of arms, he deſerves death: "if he reduces his ſubjects to that extremity, the "executing him afterwards is a mere formality." The premiſes from which Mr. Walpole deduces his concluſion, are falſe both in theory and fact: it is theoretically falſe, that every Monarch whom it is juſtifiable to oppoſe by force of arms, deſerves death; and it is hiſtorically falſe, that the Earl had gone moſt lengths with the rigicides. It is well known that the Parliament, of which the Earl was a leading member, never entertained an idea of dethroning

throning the King, much leſs of bringing him to the block. Though they had engaged in what Mr. Walpole chuſes to call open rebellion to their Sovereign, they regarded the public execution of the King as ſomething more than a mere formality; and they were fully perſuaded, that there was no juſt ground for proceeding to that dreadful and deſperate extremity. It was a military faction which effected that tragical cataſtrophe, after committing the moſt atrocious acts of violence upon the Parliament, for which they moſt juſtly deſerved to pay the forfeit of their lives; and the Earl could never act a more honourable or conſiſtent part, than in condemning thoſe wretches to the block, who had been guilty of the treaſon of ſubverting the conſtitution. It is aſtoniſhing that men of Mr. Walpole's knowledge and diſcernment cannot, or will not, perceive the difference between that oppoſition to the regal power which had, and that which had not, the ſanction of parliamentary authority.

I do not ſcruple to declare that, after the ample conceſſions made by Charles, there appears to me no ſufficient ground for taking up arms againſt the King; it was nevertheleſs the duty of a good citizen, in my apprehenſion, in a caſe of this nature, to acquieſce in the judgment of Parliament, and when hoſtilities actually commenced, to range himſelf under the banners of liberty; but when the war was ſucceſsfully concluded, and a final accommodation had taken place, or was on the point of taking place, between the King and the Parliament, it

muſt ſurely be regarded as the height of moral and political depravity, in a ſet of deſperadoes and fanatics, to uſurp the executive and legiſlative powers, to deprive the Parliament of its authority, the King of his life, and to effect the utter ſubverſion of the eſtabliſhed conſtitution; and yet the noble Earl is branded with glaring injuſtice, for ſitting in judgment upon thoſe miſcreants. I do not chuſe to tax Mr. Walpole with glaring injuſtice, but from the charge of glaring abſurdity I think he will not find it eaſy to vindicate this harſh and unmerited cenſure. "That his Lordſhip ſailed with the times," ſays Mr. Walpole, "remains notorious; thoſe prin-
"ciples muſt be of an accommodating temper,
"which could ſuffer the ſame man to be Preſident
"of a Republican Council of State, and recom-
"mend him for Chancellor to an arbitrary and
"Popiſh King." The charge againſt the Earl of Angleſey for ſailing with the times, is ridiculous. Can it be denied that he uſed his utmoſt efforts, as an honeſt and able ſtateſman, to ſtem the torrent? That he ſubmitted to the uſurpation of Cromwell, is a crime common to his Lordſhip with the whole nation. The Earl was not ſo arrant a political Quixote, as to oppoſe an eſtabliſhed government, without ſome probability of ſucceſs; and it is certain that he embraced, with ardour, the firſt favourable opportunity that offered for reſtoring the King and Conſtitution; and if he was "well rewarded," it is no leſs certain that he well deſerved to be rewarded for his ſignal ſervices upon that memorable occaſion.

occaſion. As to the proof here given by Mr. Walpole, of his accommodating principles, I ſee nothing diſhonourable in his accepting of the office of Preſident of the Council of State, under the Republic; and if Mr. Walpole's memory had not ſtrangely failed him in writing this article, he muſt have recollected, that in the preceding page he had himſelf allowed, that the ſuppoſition of his being appointed Chancellor to James II. was highly improbable. "Once," continues Mr. Walpole, "when "the Earl of Eſſex charged him in the Houſe of "Lords with being prayed for by the Papiſts, An-"gleſey ſaid, he believed it was not ſo; but if Jews "in their ſynagogues, or Turks in their moſques, "would pray for him unaſked, he ſhould be glad to "be the better for their devotion. Had he really "been nominated to the Chancellorſhip by James "II. probably he would have pleaded that it was "not of his own ſeeking, but owing to the prayers "of the Catholics, and he was glad to be the better "for them." In this paſſage we have a curious ſpecimen of Mr. Walpole's candour.—Becauſe the Earl upon one occaſion replied to a malicious inſinuation, like a wiſe and an honeſt man, Mr. Walpole thinks it probable that upon another he would have anſwered like a buffoon and a knave. If I have been too diffuſe, or too warm in my vindication of the Earl of Angleſey, who, to ſay the truth, is not a very intereſting or important character in the annals of Engliſh hiſtory, it may perhaps be admitted as ſome ſort of apology, that I am myſelf a deſcendant

of this noble Earl; and I really believe, from all the information public or private which I have been able to obtain of his Lordſhip's character and conduct, that he was a man by no means deficient either in underſtanding or in probity.

The character of Lord Somers is drawn with that happy delicacy, to uſe Mr. Walpole's words upon another occaſion, which finiſhes while it only ſeems to ſketch..

Of the Earl of Orford, the famous Sir Robert Walpole, Mr. Walpole affirms, that ſixteen unfortunate and inglorious years ſince his removal, have written the eulogium. It is but juſtice, however, to the memory of Mr. Pelham, to ſay, that the years ſucceeding the peace of Aix la Chapelle, to the end of the life of that honeſt and able Miniſter, were neither unfortunate nor inglorious.

Mr. Walpole, in his great zeal to invalidate the title of Lady Jane Grey, which was certainly one of the weakeſt that ever inſulted the underſtanding of any nation, appears to me to adopt a very dangerous maxim in politics, viz. That the power given by Parliament to King Henry VIII. to regulate the ſucceſſion, not being founded on national expediency, could be of no force.—Who is the proper judge of national expediency in this caſe; the Legiſlature, or a private individual?

Upon Mr. Walpole's account of the celebrated Lord Falkland, there is much ſcope for animadverſion. A writer who could characterize this gallant,

gallant, patriotic and virtuous nobleman, as a "weak but well-meaning man, who got knocked "on the head early in the civil war, becauſe it "boded ill," muſt ſurely have taken ſome pains to repreſs the emotions of ſympathetic and generous ſenſibility. That Lord Falkland was not a weak man, whatever Mr. Walpole may imagine, is ſufficiently evident, as well from the various productions of his pen, as from the high reputation he acquired with his co-temporaries, for underſtanding as well as integrity. It is eaſily conceivable that Lord Falkland, though he had acted with Hampden and the Patriots, might believe it to be his duty to join the royal party, after the great ſacrifices the King had made; and though the danger to be apprehended from the ſucceſs of the King's arms, and the undoubted right of Parliament to judge whether the conceſſions made by the Crown, were ſufficient to ſecure the Conſtitution from future attacks, ſhould, I think, have inclined him to adopt a different line of conduct, it is abſurd to repreſent his erroneous choice as a proof of a defect of underſtanding. Upon that great occaſion, men of equal abilities, knowledge, and integrity, would, doubtleſs, as in every other ſituation of importance and difficulty, ſee things in very different points of view. His indulgence of melancholy, and his diſregard of life, in the critical and dangerous ſtate of public affairs, after the commencement of the war, may indeed be juſtly conſidered as extremely culpable: but ſuch faults are too rare,

rare, and proceed from motives too generous and noble, to make it neceſſary to treat them with ſuch contemptuous and ſarcaſtic levity.

I know not whether any apology be neceſſary to Mr. Walpole, for the freedom of animadverſion which I have indulged in theſe remarks—If I may preſume to judge of his feelings in this inſtance by my own, he will not deem it any juſt ground of offence that writings, which by the very act of publication are ſubmitted to the public cenſure, ſhould be conſidered as the proper ſubject of free criticiſm. That reſerve and ceremony with which it is uſual to oppoſe each other's ſentiments in converſation would, in a more public diſcuſſion, appear tedious and trifling formality; and the laws of propriety and decorum are not violated in one caſe, by a deviation from thoſe maxims which were eſtabliſhed for the regulation of our conduct in another.

ESSAY XIX.

On MATERIALISM.

A JUSTLY celebrated Chriſtian Divine and Philoſopher has excited the attention of the learned world in general, and the aſtoniſhment and indignation of a great part of it, by the publication of a treatiſe written in defence of the ſyſtem of Materialiſm; in which he attempts to prove, contrary to the opinions which have been almoſt univerſally prevalent in the Chriſtian Church for a long ſucceſſion of ages, that man does not conſiſt of two ſubſtances eſſentially different from each other; but that the conſcious principle, or what we generally term the Soul, is merely a property reſulting from ſuch an organical ſtructure as that of the brain. It follows, as an immediate and neceſſary conſequence, from this hypotheſis, that the idea of the natural immortality of the Soul is wholly fallacious, as the properties of thought and ſenſation muſt of courſe be extinguiſhed at the diſſolution of that ſyſtem of organized matter to which they appertain. This opinion has long been conſidered as a tenet peculiar to infidelity; and Materialiſm

Materialiſm has been held in almoſt as much abhorrence by the generality of Chriſtians, as Atheiſm itſelf. The arguments of ſo able a writer as Dr. Prieſtley muſt, however, be entitled to a deliberate and impartial examination; and when we know that ſo learned a divine, and ſo acute a metaphyſician, does not deem the ſyſtem of Materialiſm inconſiſtent with the belief and profeſſion of Chriſtianity, it ſhould incline us to abate ſomewhat of our prejudice againſt this obnoxious opinion, and to exerciſe that candour in inveſtigating the ſubject, which we ſhould perhaps be apt to diſcard as too nearly allied to criminal indifference for religion, when controverting the ſuppoſed hereſies of Spinoza, Hobbes, or Collins.

In this Eſſay I propoſe to exhibit a general view, both of the popular and unpopular hypotheſis relative to this ſubject, and of the arguments by which they are ſeverally ſupported, and to offer a few remarks upon each. And, Firſt, the Immaterialiſts urge, as a proof equally clear, conciſe, and concluſive, as a proof nothing ſhort of demonſtration of the eſſential difference between matter and ſpirit, that the principle of perception, or conſciouſneſs, being in its own nature a ſimple, unextended, and indiviſible power, muſt inhere in a ſimple, unextended, and indiviſible ſubſtance; whereas, the properties of ſolidity and extenſion are abſolutely eſſential to matter, which is therefore neceſſarily a diſcerpible ſubſtance,

ſtance, conſiſting of ſeparable, nay, of actually ſeparate and diſtinct parts; and as the whole can contain nothing more than the ſum or aggregate of the powers or qualities inherent in all its parts, a ſyſtem of matter, however exquiſite its ſtructure or organization, cannot be poſſeſſed of conſciouſneſs or perception, unleſs conſciouſneſs be ſuppoſed to be an inherent property of matter: and upon this hypotheſis, if matter be infinitely diviſible, conſciouſneſs muſt likewiſe be infinitely diviſible, which is a groſs abſurdity: or if matter be ultimately reducible to indiviſible particles, each particle muſt poſſeſs a certain degree of perception, and then the ſimple and individual power of perception belonging to a ſyſtem of matter, ſuch as the brain, muſt conſiſt of a multitude of diſtinct and ſeparate perceptions, belonging to its ſeveral component particles, which is a palpable contradiction: it is evident, then, to a demonſtration, that the principle of perception is an immaterial principle; and if an immaterial, an immortal principle; for a ſubſtance which has, as far as we can perceive, no properties in common with matter, cannot, without a manifeſt abſurdity, be ſuppoſed affected, much leſs annihilated, by the diſſolution of that material ſyſtem to which it is, by divine power, for a certain period united.—Death, in fact, is nothing more than the ſeparation of ſoul and body, and when diſincumbered from this groſs material vehicle, the immortal ſpirit will doubtleſs take its flight into the regions of empyreum,

reum, emancipated from every ſpecies of diſorder and indiſpoſition, derived from the contagion of fleſh and blood.

Excluſive, however, of this grand and demonſtrative argument in favour of the ſyſtem of Immaterialiſm, there are various conſiderations which ſhould induce us to believe that matter and ſpirit are ſubſtances eſſentially diſtinct from each other, and that the conſcious principle does not depend upon any organical material ſyſtem for its exiſtence or ſupport. The immortality, and conſequently the immateriality, of the ſoul, may be ſtrongly argued from the almoſt univerſal aſſent of mankind, and from "that eager hope, that ſtrong deſire, that "longing after immortality," accompanied with "that inward dread and ſecret horror of falling into "nought," which operates ſo powerfully throughout the rational creation, and from which the inferior orders of animal beings are wholly exempt. Why ſhould our omnipotent and beneficent Creator implant in our minds theſe deluſive hopes? Why ſhould he excite deſires which are never to be ſatisfied? Why hold out to our view a proſpect of happineſs to which we can never attain? Do not our minds revolt at the idea, that a mode of conduct ſo arbitrary and capricious, can be adopted by a Being infinite in wiſdom and goodneſs? Surely we ſhall not dare to aſcribe principles of government and action to the Deity, by which we ſhould think even humanity degraded!

But

But it may be farther urged, that man is plainly in his own nature, an accountable creature; he is endowed with powers and faculties of a very exalted kind. Theſe powers he is equally capable of applying to the beſt and to the worſt purpoſes; by the proper uſe and application of them, he may attain to the love and practice of every virtue, and by the neglect or abuſe of them, he will certainly ſink into the loweſt abyſſes of vice and depravity. Can it be imagined, then, that the great Being who gave us reaſon and underſtanding, that we might know how to refuſe the evil and chooſe the good; who gave us freedom of agency, in order to enable us to make that choice: who gave us conſcience to ſerve as a perpetual monitor within our breaſts, pointing out our duty to us, exhorting us to the ſtrict performance of it, and ſilently warning us of the danger of acting contrary to its dictates—Can it be imagined, that He will permit theſe noble faculties to be abuſed, theſe warnings to be deſpiſed, and theſe obvious deſigns of his Providence to be counteracted with impunity? "If there is a God, he "muſt delight in virtue, and that which he delights "in muſt be happy;" and as happineſs is not an invariable concomitant of virtue, nor miſery of vice, in this life, it is certain that a future day of retribution muſt arrive: and the immortality of the Soul is a doctrine, without which it is not poſſible to eſtabliſh the rectitude of the Divine Nature, or the juſtice of the Divine Government, upon a ſolid or ſatisfactory foundation.

Again,

Again, if we make our appeal to fact and experience, we ſhall find the reſult equally concluſive in favour of the immaterial, and conſequently the immortal nature of the Soul's eſſence. Every man, by reflecting upon the operations of his own mind, may eaſily be convinced that the conſcious principle is ſomething totally different from that corporeal frame in which it reſides, and which, being itſelf inert, muſt receive life and animation from this intimate and myſterious union. It is as impoſſible, ſtrictly and philoſophically ſpeaking, that perception ſhould be a property of the brain, however exquiſite its organical ſtructure, as that the moſt irregular and fortuitous combination of the ſame impercipient particles ſhould poſſeſs this power; and though it muſt be allowed, that the brain is in ſome inexplicable manner inſtrumental to thought, as the eye is to viſion, or the ear to hearing, yet the faculty of perception, and the organ, by means of which that faculty is actually exerted, ſurely ought not to be confounded. When the eye happens to be cloſed, or when it is inveloped in darkneſs, the Soul certainly has not loſt its *faculty* of ſeeing, though by a temporary obſtruction the exerciſe of that faculty may for a ſhort ſpace be ſuſpended, and when the mental powers ſeem to be injured and impaired through age or diſeaſe, it is not that the immaterial immortal ſubſtance is in any reſpect changed, or capable of change: theſe ſymptoms of decay can only be occaſioned by the partial derangement of that material ſyſtem, which muſt at laſt

laſt ſuffer a total diſſolution, and when the ſoul, or conſcious principle, is ſeparated from the body by death, "it will then be bare to the immediate im-"preſſion of objects, and the hand which feels an "object at the end of a ſtaff, may certainly be "allowed to feel the ſame much better by imme-"diate contact." Wollaſt. Rel. of N. Sect. 9. § 7.

Laſtly, It is urged by Chriſtian Immaterialiſts, that the ſacred Scriptures, in a variety of paſſages, expreſsly aſſert the ſeparate exiſtence of the ſoul, and clearly and plainly inculcate the doctrine of its natural immortality; a doctrine which was almoſt univerſally received by the learned amongſt the Jews, at the period of Chriſt's Incarnation, as well as by that part of the heathen world which embraced the Platonic ſyſtem of Philoſophy, a ſyſtem which at that period, and for many ages afterwards, was diſtinguiſhed by its prevalence and popularity, no leſs than its intrinſic excellence; and in this point, at leaſt, its perfect conſonance to the dictates of right reaſon, confirmed by the expreſs declarations of the Chriſtian revelation.

The Advocates for Materialiſm, on the other hand, profeſs to hold theſe and the like arguments in ſovereign contempt, and endeavour to eſtabliſh their own hypotheſis, by reaſons which appear to them of a much more obvious and convincing nature. The arguments urged by our opponents, ſay they, are deduced either from metaphyſical conſiderations, relating to the eſſence and properties of

matter and ſpirit, or from the moral attributes of the Deity, diſcoverable by the light of nature, or from the expreſs declarations of the ſacred Scriptures. As to the pretended metaphyſical demonſtration of the eſſential difference between matter and ſpirit, founded upon the unity of conſciouſneſs belonging to the one, and the diſcerpibility characteriſtic of the other, nothing can be more weak and inconcluſive; for if we ſuppoſe, and all appearances lead us to ſuppoſe, this unity of conſciouſneſs to reſult from a peculiar ſyſtem of organization, it is evident that the matter of which the organized ſyſtem is compoſed, being deranged or ſeparated, the power of perception, though not capable of diviſion, will ceaſe, or become extinct. That perception ſhould reſult from any compoſition or combination of impercipient particles, muſt indeed be acknowledged to bear the appearance of a difficulty; but it is a difficulty by no means inſuperable, when we recollect that in almoſt innumerable inſtances, complete ſyſtems or integral combinations of matter, poſſeſs properties entirely different from thoſe which appertain to its ſeveral component parts. Sphericity, for inſtance, is a property belonging to a complete globe, of which the component particles are entirely deſtitute: the moſt common piece of mechaniſm, a watch, a harpſichord, or a teleſcope, muſt alſo be allowed to poſſeſs powers reſulting from the ſkilful arrangement of the ſeveral parts ſpecifically different from thoſe which inhere in the parts themſelves; and ſhall we venture, blind and

ignorant

ignorant as we are, to affirm, that the Divine Artificer cannot ſo arrange and organize thoſe material particles which compoſe the human frame, as to produce a ſyſtem which ſhall poſſeſs properties different from thoſe which inhere in each diſtinct particle? If, however, this ſhould raſhly and impiouſly be pronounced impoſſible, and the principle of perception ſhould be deemed a ſubſtance eſſentially different from matter, and ſuperadded by Divine power to the organized ſyſtem, unleſs we wiſh to amuſe ourſelves with words deſtitute of real meaning, we ſhall ſoon be convinced how little advantage the Immaterialiſt can derive from this conceſſion. To the term ſubſtance we can affix no other idea, than that it is the unknown ſupport of certain known properties: if this definition conveys any meaning, it is certainly extremely dark and obſcure; and who can pretend to be ſo intimately acquainted with the arcana of nature, as to be able to demonſtrate that the ſubſtance by which the property of perception is at preſent ſupported, will be adequate to its ſupport when diſunited from that material ſyſtem, by the inſtrumentality of which every act of perception is exerted. It is well known, that all our ideas and perceptions are derived from the impreſſions made on the brain by the different organs of ſenſe; and though the abſtract power, or principle of perception, ſhould be ſuppoſed to remain after the final diſſolution of the corporeal ſyſtem, it is a power which cannot be proved to exiſt by any effect; the different organs of ſenſe being indiſpenſably neceſ-

ſary to the exertion of this power; it muſt therefore remain dormant and inactive, till it is again united to a material vehicle; and this is, in fact, the opinion, however wild and fanciful it may ſeem, of thoſe Chriſtians who, ſtiling themſelves Immaterialiſts, maintain a ſuſpenſion of conſciouſneſs in the interval between death and the reſurrection. But if we exclude the idea of a reſurrection, it may be aſked, what is the difference between ſuch a ſtate of unconſciouſneſs and abſolute annihilation? The material organized ſyſtem is diſſolved; perception has totally ceaſed; and nothing remains, but the immaterial ſubſtance, or the unknown ſupport of a non-exiſting property. A man muſt ſurely have a ſtrange attachment to particular terms and phraſes, who can ſatisfy himſelf with ſuch an unintelligible ſalvo as this, in order to paſs for an Immaterialiſt.—How much more conſiſtent and candid would it be to acknowledge, without reſerve, that man is of an uniform compoſition, and that perception is the property or reſult of ſuch an organical ſtructure as that of the brain? Indeed it is highly unphiloſophical, and a mere arbitrary ſuppoſition, to maintain the exiſtence of two principles eſſentially different in the ſame being, if all the properties of this individual being can inhere in the ſame ſubſtance; and where is the inconſiſtency of ſuppoſing perception compatible with extenſion and ſolidity?—It is impoſſible, indeed, for us to explain how perception reſults from a material ſubſtance; but is it not equally impoſſible to form any conjecture how it reſults from

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an immaterial ſubſtance? It is ſufficient to aſcertain the fact, and the fact is ſufficiently aſcertained. —" I ſee a man move, and hear him ſpeak; from " his ſpeech I certainly infer, that he thinks as I " do. I ſee, then, that man is a being who " thinks and acts.—After ſome time the man " falls down in my ſight, grows cold and ſtiff.— " He ſpeaks and acts no more. Is it not, then, " reaſonable to conclude, that he thinks no more? " As the only reaſon I had to believe that he " did think, was his motion and ſpeech, ſo, now " that this motion and ſpeech ceaſe, I have loſt " the only way of proving that he had a power of " thought. Whence can I infer that the man " conſiſts of two parts, and that the inward part " continues to live and think, when the outward " part ceaſes to live and move?—His motion and " thought die together, as far as I can diſcern." Hallet's Diſc. p. 213.

As to the argument drawn from internal feeling, and from the ſuppoſed conſciouſneſs in every man, that the principle of perception is a ſubſtance eſſentially different from matter, and not a mere property of matter, it is almoſt too futile for notice. All that any man can poſſibly be conſcious of, by reflecting upon the operations of his own mind is, that he is poſſeſſed of " the power " of perception:" but whether this power reſides in a diviſible or indiviſible, a material or immaterial ſubſtance, muſt be determined, if it can be determined at all, by reaſoning; and thoſe facts upon

which our reaſonings muſt be founded, are obviouſly contrary to any ſuch concluſion. To affirm that perception cannot ariſe from, or be ſuperadded as an adventitious property, to any organical ſyſtem of matter, is to begin and end a controverſy by begging the queſtion. If the immaterial ſubſtance in which perception reſides, has, as the generality of Immaterialiſts aſſert, no properties in common with matter, how is it poſſible for the two ſubſtances mutually to act and re-act upon each other? A ſubſtance deſtitute of properties, is a mere name; and two ſubſtances poſſeſſed of properties ſpecifically different, no more exiſt, with relation to each other, than if they were entirely deſtitute of properties. This is a difficulty of ſuch magnitude, that the celebrated Dr. Clarke and others have allowed extenſion or expanſion to be a property common to both: and indeed it ſeems ſelf-evident, that whatever exiſts muſt exiſt ſomewhere, or in ſome part of infinite ſpace, and muſt occupy ſome portion of ſpace; *i. e.* muſt have figure and extenſion. But if the immaterial ſubſtance of the ſoul has figure and extenſion, what becomes of the argument drawn from the indiſcerpibility of the thinking ſubſtance? Whatever is poſſeſſed of finite extenſion, muſt certainly in its own nature be capable of diviſion; and perception, though in itſelf a property incapable of diviſion, if admitted to be the property of a ſubſtance capable of diviſion, may certainly be deemed the property of a material, as conſiſtently as of an immaterial ſubſtance; for though matter

matter be poſſeſſed of ſolidity as well as extenſion. He muſt be an able metaphyſician indeed, who can demonſtrate that extenſion is, and ſolidity is not, compatible with perception. Not to mention that what is generally ſtiled ſolidity, or impenetrability, may really be nothing more than a power of repulſion; that power alone being fully adequate to the ſolution of all the phænomena relative to matter, uſually aſcribed to ſolidity. But enough, ſurely, has now been urged to expoſe the weakneſs and vanity of this pretended demonſtration, which places the natural immortality of a man preciſely upon the ſame foundation with the natural immortality of the "poor beetle that we tread upon;" which is equally endowed with the power of perception, and which, as the great Poet remarks,

"In corporal ſufferance feels a pang as great
As when a giant dies."

But there are other arguments deduced from the conſideration of the moral attributes of God, which are repreſented as deciſive proofs of the immortality and conſequent immateriality of the ſoul: and to theſe arguments certainly every man who wiſhes to promote the beſt intereſts of mankind, would willingly allow all the weight and force of which they are in their own nature capable. It is, however, highly unbecoming a philoſopher and lover of truth, to feign a conviction which he does not feel; and it muſt not be diſguiſed, that theſe arguments ſo favourable to natural religion, but which ſeem in a great meaſure to ſuperſede the neceſſity

of a divine revelation, are a very frail foundation to build our hopes of immortality upon. Reaſon aſſures us of nothing farther concerning the natural or moral attributes of the Deity than can be inferred from the phænomena of nature.—From theſe we may certainly infer the eternal exiſtence of a firſt cauſe of infinite power and wiſdom; but of the infinite goodneſs of this great Being, though benevolence evidently appears to predominate in the works of creation, the proof is materially defective. Juſtice, holineſs, truth, rectitude, &c. as applied to the Deity, are only modifications of goodneſs; and it is aſſerted on the one ſide, and admitted on the other, that theſe attributes cannot be fully vindicated, but upon the ſuppoſition of a future ſtate of retribution, which implies the doctrine of the ſoul's immortality: and it is certainly true, that the doctrine of the natural immortality of the ſoul, may, with very good effect, be applied to the vindication of the moral attributes of God; and, on the other hand, the moral attributes of God may be applied, with equal ſucceſs, to prove the doctrine of the ſoul's immortality; there is, indeed, this perplexing circumſtance attending the proof of each, that you muſt ſuppoſe the truth of the one, in order to prove the truth of the other. Unfortunately, natural phænomena are unfavourable to each, ſeparately conſidered; and as it is neceſſary to prove the truth of one, without the aſſiſtance of the other, unleſs your adverſary has the complaiſance to diſpenſe with the common rules of logic, the difficulty of knowing

knowing where to begin ſeems abſolutely inſuperable. It is evidently arguing in a circle, to ſay, that the Divine juſtice and goodneſs prove the doctrine of the ſoul's immortality, and that the doctrine of a future retribution proves that God is poſſeſſed of the attributes of infinite juſtice and goodneſs; neither the one nor the other can be ſatisfactorily and fully proved, upon the principles of natural reaſon: and this it is which makes a divine revelation ſo peculiarly neceſſary, and ſo highly valuable. Chriſtianity informs us, that though a ſuſpenſion of conſciouſneſs will take place upon a diſſolution of the preſent material ſyſtem, a day will arrive, when God will illuſtriouſly diſplay his power, by reſtoring that organical ſyſtem upon which thought and perception depend; and in that day he will himſelf vindicate his own attributes, by judging the world in righteouſneſs. The Reſurrection is that great event which Chriſt came into the world to promulgate, and which he died and roſe again to eſtabliſh by the moſt indubitable evidence. It is the grand, the fundamental doctrine of Chriſtianity; and if there are a few paſſages of ſcripture which ſeem to intimate a continuation of conſciouſneſs in a ſeparate ſtate, it would be eaſy to ſhow, if this was intended for a theological diſſertation, that the true meaning of theſe paſſages has been greatly miſapprehended. The doctrine of the Goſpel is, that the trumpet ſhall ſound, and the dead ſhall be raiſed, and that this

this mortal ſhall then, and not till then, put on immortality. The Chriſtian doctrine of a reſurrection has, by ſome, indeed, been repreſented, although very injuriouſly, as amounting to an expreſs contradiction. If, ſay they, thought and perception ariſe from certain modifications of matter, when the material ſyſtem, ſo modified, is diſſolved, the percipient principle is wholly annihilated—it is a non-entity; and the reſurrection of a non-entity is a palpable abſurdity; but, ſurely, if thought and perception neceſſarily reſult from any organical ſyſtem, the reſtoration of that organical ſyſtem, though it had been diſſolved ten thouſand ages, muſt alſo be accompanied with a reſtoration of the powers of thought and ſenſation. By reſtoring the former arrangement, thought and ſenſation would return as neceſſarily and mechanically, as ſhape and figure would return. If, however, perception ſhould be ſuppoſed a quality not inherent in matter, but ſuperadded to it by Divine power, doubtleſs, the ſame Divine power which originally produced, could re-produce and annex the ſame conſciouſneſs to the ſame ſyſtem at his pleaſure. We ſee, in fact, that perception may be totally ſuſpended, and afterwards reſtored; as in the caſe of trances, deliquium, ſuffocation, &c. But ſurely it is as eaſy to Almighty Power to reſtore a ſuſpended animation and conſciouſneſs, after the lapſe of a thouſand years, as of one day or one moment: if the thing itſelf be not impoſſible, it is abſurd

abſurd to ſuppoſe that the length or ſhortneſs of the interval can either create or remove any real difficulty.

I ſhall now conclude this Eſſay, as I propoſed, with a few remarks. And after the moſt attentive and impartial examination of which I am capable, I muſt acknowle.lge that the argument ſo much relied upon by the Immaterialiſts, ſeems to me clearly to prove that perception is not, and cannot poſſibly be, philoſophically ſpeaking, a property, *i. e.* an innate property of matter. It appears to me an abſolute contradiction, that perception ſhould ariſe from any combination of impercipient particles; a whole can never poſſeſs a property which does not inhere in the parts. The inſtances of the globe, watch, harpſichord, &c. have not the moſt diſtant tendency to invalidate this truth. They are only ſo many different combinations of figure, motion, &c. qualities, of which all the component particles of theſe machines are poſſeſſed; and the power of the whole is evidently the reſult of the united powers of all the parts. To make the caſes parallel, matter, as ſuch, muſt be endued with perception; which appears to me an atheiſtical idea, and, like all other atheiſtical ideas, groſsly abſurd. Matter is infinitely diviſible.—Is perception infinitely diviſible? Or matter is, we will ſuppoſe, reducible to ſolid, primary, percipient particles.—Is the perception of a human being the reſult of an infinite

infinite number of inferior and ſubordinate perceptions? The Immaterialiſts have reaſon to triumph, when they reduce their adverſaries to the neceſſity of anſwering theſe queſtions in the affirmative. On the other hand, when the Immaterialiſts confidently affirm, that perception is the property of an immaterial ſubſtance, which will continue to ſubſiſt after the diſſolution of the preſent mortal and periſhable frame, they ſeem to me to affirm what it is impoſſible to prove—to affirm what is unſupported, or rather contradicted, by the appearances of nature, and the deductions of reaſon. Perception I believe to be a property ſuperadded to matter, in a manner ſomewhat analogous to gravity. The idea of innate perception, as well as of innate gravity, may be juſtly exploded; but perception may nevertheleſs be regarded as a property annexed to certain combinations of matter, by the Supreme Being, and as a property which will not ſubſiſt ſeparate from thoſe organical ſyſtems, to which it is, by Divine Power, for a certain period united. The plain dictate of reaſon, in this caſe is, that at death the duſt returns to the earth again, and the ſpirit unto God who gave it.

The arguments deduced from the conſideration of the moral attributes of God, though ſcarcely amounting to probability, ſeem to me of more weight than this boaſted demonſtration. It muſt be owned, indeed, that the moral perfections of

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the Divine Nature, and the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, cannot be employed as reciprocal proofs of each other. But I think that the phænomena of Nature, attentively conſidered, ſtrongly indicate the boundleſs extent of the moral as well as the natural perfections of the Deity. As the power and wiſdom of God are infinite, there is a ſtrong preſumption from analogy that his goodneſs is alſo infinite. We ſee that the courſe of Providence is upon the whole favourable to virtue; we ſee a connection eſtabliſhed, though a very imperfect one, between virtue and happineſs, vice and miſery, in the preſent life; and if there is ſufficient reaſon to admit that this connection reſults from the eternal purpoſe of the Divine Will, what ſhould prevent its final and complete accompliſhment? If virtue is the object of the Divine complacency and approbation, it will certainly be ultimately rewarded with happineſs, however unfavourable preſent appearances may be. "What ſhall ſeparate us "from the love of God," exclaims the Apoſtle Paul, under the animating influence of this perſuaſion, "Neither death nor life, nor angels, nor "principalities, nor powers, nor things preſent, "nor things to come."

I ſhall only add, that the Scripture doctrine reſpecting a future ſtate, appears to me to be conformable to the ſentiments of the Materialiſts, and thoſe nominal Immaterialiſts who reject the opinion of an intermediate conſcious ſtate between death and the reſurrection. It is impoſſible to ſuppoſe,

ſuppoſe that the Reſurrection, upon which ſo much ſtreſs is placed in Scripture, as affording an immoveable foundation for "a moſt bleſſed and glorious hope," ſhould refer merely to the reſurrection of the body, which, according to the principles of the Immaterialiſts, ought rather to be deprecated as a real misfortune. At the ſame time I acknowledge, that ſeveral paſſages of the ſacred writings, ſeparately conſidered, ſeem not eaſily reconcileable to this hypotheſis. It cannot, however, be pretended, with any colour of plauſibility, even by unbelievers, that there could be any real inconſiſtency in the opinions of the firſt Chriſtians, reſpecting a point of this nature; and therefore the ſeeming import of a few detached paſſages, obviouſly inconſiſtent with the general tenor of the apoſtolic writings, need not prevent us from embracing, with a full aſſurance of faith, a doctrine ſupported by plain, repeated and unequivocal declarations.

ESSAY XX.

Observations *on* Genius.

WHAT is Genius? A certain writer of reſpectable abilities, who has treated this ſubject according to the too general practiſe of his countrymen, with much parade of ſyſtematic inveſtigation, has compoſed a volume of five hundred pages, in anſwer to this enquiry; and if we may confide in the poſitive determination of Dr. Gerard, Genius is only another word for Invention: and having thus aſcertained the import of the term, he tells us, what I ſhould ſuppoſe few perſons are ignorant of, that Imagination is that power of the mind to which Invention muſt be principally referred; and, as if this was a doubtful point, he expatiates largely upon it, and eſtabliſhes and enforces it, by all the powers of reaſon and eloquence. Imagination, however, being at length demonſtrated in all the forms of logic, to be that faculty which is the immediate ſource of Invention, the learned Profeſſor enters into a minute analyſis of thoſe general laws of aſſociation, which produce

produce the ſeveral modifications of which the imagination is ſuſceptible. We are informed, with an air of myſterious gravity, that the imagination does not act at random in aſſociating ideas; but that there are certain qualities or relations of ideas, which fit them for being aſſociated; and the author, after Mr. Hume, reſolves thoſe relations into reſemblance, contrariety, vicinity, co-exiſtence, &c. and we are told that habit, and the paſſions alſo, have an extenſive influence on the aſſociating principle. We are next amuſed with an account of the modifications of the aſſociating principles, and many other abſtruſe metaphyſical diſquiſitions which ſeem to me very ſlightly connected with the main ſubject, and which, in my opinion, have been much more happily and ſatisfactorily diſcuſſed, though with much leſs oſtentation of knowledge, by Locke, Hartley, and Hume. I ſee not, for my own part, what light is thrown upon the queſtion relative to the nature of Genius, by a long and tedious analyſis of the faculty of aſſociation, which operates in perfect conformity to the ſame general laws in all men, whether they are poſſeſſed or not of any extraordinary powers of imagination or Genius. But, to wave any farther obſervations on the mode in which the learned Profeſſor has choſen to treat this ſubject, I ſhall content myſelf with objecting to the firſt ſtep taken by Dr. Gerard in the inveſtigation of this queſtion; I mean, to his definition of the term.

term. "Genius," ſays Dr. Gerard, "is pro-
"perly the faculty of Invention, by means of
"which a man is qualified for making new diſco-
"veries in ſcience, or for producing original
"works of art." "The true Genius," ſays Dr. Johnſon, "is a mind of great general powers,
"accidentally determined to ſome particular direc-
"tion:" and elſewhere he ſtiles Genius "that
"quality, without which judgment is cold, and
"knowledge is inert; that energy which collects,
"combines, amplifies, and animates; always in-
"veſtigating, always aſpiring; in its wideſt ſearches,
"ſtill longing to go forward, always imagining
"ſomething greater than it knows, always endea-
"vouring more than it can do." Of theſe two different accounts of Genius, I acknowledge that the latter appears to me to approach much neareſt to the truth. I am of opinion that Dr. Gerard has totally miſtaken the nature of Genius, when he affirms that Genius is "one of the intellectual
"powers, and conſpicuouſly diſtinguiſhable from
"the reſt." "Genius," ſays the Profeſſor, "is
"confounded not only by the vulgar, but even
"ſometimes by judicious writers, with mere capa-
"city, which implies nothing beyond a little
"judgment, a tolerable memory, and conſidera-
"ble induſtry." But I know not any writer vulgar enough, or, rather, abſurd enough, to confound Genius with mere capacity, as deſcribed by Dr. Gerard; that is, with the loweſt, or, if not the loweſt, with a very low degree of capacity; though

I acknowledge that I have met with very judicious writers, who regard Genius as differing from capacity, not in kind, but in degree; and this is evidently the idea of Dr. Johnſon. When the capacity of any individual, *i. e.* his ability for acquiring, retaining, and digeſting knowledge, ariſes to a certain degree of ſuperiority above the common level, we ſtile him, without heſitation, a man of Genius, without any excluſive reference to the faculty of Invention. It is true, that vigour of Imagination almoſt invariably accompanying any remarkable ſuperiority of capacity, it is juſtly conſidered as one of the principal ingredients which enter into the complex idea of Genius: but judgment, memory, underſtanding, enthuſiaſm, and ſenſibility, are alſo included; for a very high degree of capacity is as conſtantly found conjoined with theſe mental qualities, as with Imagination or Invention; and though the man of Genius may not poſſeſs all theſe properties in the ſame degree, and though the relations they bear to each other cannot be aſcertained by any fixed rule of proportion, the total abſence of any one of them will diveſt him of all pretenſions to the praiſe of Genius. In vindication, however, of that erroneous hypotheſis which reduces Genius to mere Invention, Dr. Gerard obſerves, "that if a man ſhews "Invention, no intellectual defects which his "performance may betray, can forfeit his claim "to Genius, and the degree of this faculty "aſcribed to him, is always in proportion to "our

" our eſtimate of the novelty, the difficulty, or the " dignity of his inventions." But this is evidently ſuppoſing a caſe which is never known to exiſt: the faculty of Invention is invariably accompanied with a certain degree of judgment, underſtanding, ſenſibility, and taſte. If it could be ſuppoſed or proved to exiſt, entirely unconnected with theſe qualities, it moſt certainly would not entitle the poſſeſſor to the praiſe of Genius, but to the reproach of folly and extravagance. Dr. Gerard himſelf allows, in another part of his work, that " mere Imagina- " tion will not conſtitute Genius. As fancy," he very juſtly obſerves, " has an indirect dependance " both on ſenſe and memory, from which it re- " ceives the firſt elements of all its conceptions; " ſo, when it exerts itſelf in the way of Genius, it " has an immediate connection with judgment, " which muſt conſtantly correct and regulate its " ſuggeſtions." But how does this coincide with his former aſſertion, that Genius is ſtrictly and properly the faculty of Invention? Dr. Gerard ſeems to think, that he has ſufficiently reconciled theſe apparent contradictions, by remarking, that " if fancy were left entirely to itſelf, it would run " into wild caprice and extravagance, unworthy " to be called *Invention.*" This is really curious.— Dr. Gerard will not allow us to call Invention Invention, becauſe it does not happen to ſuit his hypotheſis; but certainly, if Genius is nothing more nor leſs than Invention, the wildeſt caprices of fancy are indubitable marks of Genius. It is

true that the learned Profeſſor ſhelters himſelf under the authority of Quintilian, who ſays, "Ego porro ne inveniſſe quidem credo eum, qui "non judicavit: nec enim contraria, communia, "ſtulta inveniſſe dicitur quiſquam, ſed non "vitaſſe." But the true meaning of Quintilian is far from being favourable to the hypotheſis of Dr. Gerard. The Romans had no term in their language exactly correſponding to the word Genius; but the idea was very familiar to them: and both Cicero and Quintilian plainly perceived that it was inadequately expreſſed by the term "inven-"tio." "Quid illa vis," Tully aſks, "quæ "tandem eſt, quæ inveſtigat occulta, quæ inven-"tio, atque excogitatio dicitur?" By this energy of mind, which was called Invention, becauſe Invention was one of its principal characteriſtics, they ſaw that ſomething more than Invention was really intended; and the general idea of Quintilian reſpecting Invention, as expreſſive of Genius, did not, in fact, differ from that of Dr. Hartley, when he defines Invention to be "the art of pro-"ducing new beauties in works of imagination, and "new truths in matters of ſcience." But new beauties and new truths cannot be diſcovered without the exerciſe of judgment, reaſon, memory, and taſte; that is to ſay, Genius does not conſiſt in the mere faculty of invention; and to ſay that it conſiſts in the art of producing or diſcovering new truths or new beauties, is to make it conſiſt in that aſſemblage of mental qualities,

lities, without the joint operation of which new truths and new beauties cannot be produced. Dr. Gerard tells us, that "the degree of Genius "aſcribed to a man, is always in proportion to "our eſtimate of the novelty, difficulty, or dig-"nity of his inventions." I do not well comprehend what is meant by "eſtimating Genius by the "novelty of an invention." I thought all inventions had an equal claim to novelty, however diſſimilar they might be deemed in other reſpects. The difficulty and dignity of an invention, if by dignity be meant its utility and beauty, are indeed circumſtances which afford very ſufficient proofs of Genius in the inventor; but then they are proofs of ſomething more than a mere faculty of invention:—they ſhow that invention is aſſociated with its uſual concomitants, judgment, penetration, taſte, and feeling. The fact is, that Genius is a term, like many others, too complex to admit of a regular or preciſe definition; and if Genius is confounded by ſome writers with mere capacity, it is certainly much more excuſable than to confound it with mere invention, which is only one of the intellectual powers; whereas true Genius pervades, ſtrengthens, and illuminates the whole collective maſs, and is ſo far from being confined to invention, that it is often very conſpicuouſly diſplayed in the oppoſite and leſs dignified walk of imitation. Had the Iliad of Homer been as deſtitute of poetical fire as the burleſque, though literal tranſlation of Hobbes, ſhould we have ſcrupled to

ſtile the beautiful tranſlation of Pope a work of far ſuperior Genius to the original, though the praiſe of invention would ſtill have remained with the old Bard?

In a word, by capacity I mean an ability for acquiring knowledge. By Genius I mean an eminent and uncommon degree of capacity, including that aſſemblage or aggregate of mental qualities, uſually aſſociated with it. I mean, that energy of mind which is not only capable of receiving, but of exciting, vivid and powerful impreſſions. I include imagination, judgment, underſtanding, invention, and enthuſiaſm; and though I will not pretend to affirm that Genius cannot exiſt whenever a remarkable deficiency or diſproportion appears in any of its component properties, yet I will venture to ſay, that Genius cannot exiſt where all theſe properties are not to be found in a certain degree. Imagination is unqueſtionably one of the nobleſt of the mental powers; and when the inventive faculty produces what has truth and beauty as well as novelty to recommend it, without doubt it muſt be acknowledged an infallible criterion of Genius; but ſtill it has no excluſive right to aſſume to itſelf the appellation of Genius, which is a term of ſuch comprehenſive import, as to include within its juriſdiction all the rational and intellectual powers. There is, in fact, no one intellectual quality, which, if it ariſes to a certain height of excellence, may not be conſidered as a characteriſtic of Genius; for there is ſuch an intimate connection between

between the different mental powers, that if any ſingle quality riſes to uncommon excellence, there is a very ſtrong preſumption that the other mental qualities, though perhaps in a great degree uncultivated or neglected, are alſo naturally excellent. That quick diſcernment of beauty, and ardent admiration of it, for inſtance, which we denominate *taſte*, implies ſuch a degree of intellectual vigour and excellence, that it may very properly be regarded as a characteriſtic of Genius; though, abſtractedly conſidered, it has often and very juſtly been oppoſed to Invention, which is another and a higher mark of Genius, and which, therefore, has often been confounded with Genius. Thus Voltaire obſerves, that "Shakeſpeare has "Genius, and Addiſon taſte; between which, "however," ſays he, "there is an immenſe inter-"val." If by Genius we underſtand Invention, there is indeed a very wide interval between the power of creating, and that of merely diſcerning beauties; and the former is, no doubt, a much more ſtriking and deciſive evidence of Genius than the latter: but taſte, though a weaker, may nevertheleſs be a proper and ſatisfactory evidence of Genius; and experience ſufficiently proves, that exquiſite delicacy of taſte, or a ready and vigorous perception of beauty, is ſeldom found where invention, or the faculty of producing new beauties, or diſcovering new truths, is entirely wanting; and it cannot exiſt but in conjunction with judgment, underſtanding, and ſenſibility.

I ſhall now take the liberty to offer, as they occur, a few detached obſervations relative to the ſubject. And,

Firſt, As to the long conteſted queſtion relative to the diſparity of Genius between the two ſexes, which ſome writers who have themſelves but very ſlender pretenſions to Genius, have inſiſted upon with great apparent exultation, I muſt frankly acknowledge, that I regard the claim of MAN to ſuperiority in this view, as wholly illiberal, and void of any juſt foundation. There are two modes of compariſon, by which this queſtion may be brought to a ſhort iſſue. Firſt, if we compare men and women, born in the loweſt ranks of life, and equally deſtitute of the advantages of education, I believe it will be very generally allowed by ſuch as have viewed them with moſt attention, that women of this claſs diſcover no inferiority of underſtanding to men of the ſame deſcription. Or, ſecondly, if we compare women in the higher ſtations of life, whoſe minds have been properly cultivated, to men of the ſame rank, I believe the compariſon will be equally to the honour of the female ſex. And to inſtitute any compariſon, where the advantages of education are confined to one of the parties, would be too groſs and manifeſt a partiality.

Though Lord Cheſterfield, in order that nothing might be wanting to exhibit his ſon to the world as a conſummate politician, informs him, as a profound ſecret, that women were in reality only children of a larger growth, and were to be regarded

and

and treated as ſuch; it is certain, that of thoſe women, who have attained to the ſummit of power, a great proportion have ſhewn that their talents for government were equal to thoſe of the greateſt princes. I ſhall not, to juſtify my aſſertion, trace the records of hiſtory ſo far back as the reigns of Semiramis, Tomyris, or Zenobia; ladies of whom, I confeſs, I ſhould be happy to obtain better information: but I appeal to modern times, to facts, and to characters known to all the world. I appeal to our own renowned Elizabeth, to the famous Iſabella of Caſtile, to an Anne of Beaujeu, to a Chriſtina of Sweden, and to a Catherine II. of Ruſſia, that illuſtrious Princeſs, for whom, perhaps, the glorious taſk is deſtined, of expelling thoſe proud contemners of female underſtanding, the Turkiſh Barbarians, from thoſe delightful countries, which have ſo long groaned under the yoke of Ottoman deſpotiſm.

Secondly, it may be obſerved that no learning, no experience, no application, will either conceal or compenſate an original deficiency of Genius. Poverty of Genius in reality becomes only the more conſpicuous by an artificial conjunction with extenſive knowledge, or profound learning; and in public life, if men of mean talents, tho' of long experience and of accurate acquaintance with the detail of buſineſs, are ever ſo unfortunate as to be elevated to the higheſt departments of the State, there is perpetual danger, leſt for want of comprehenſion of mind and perſpicacity of diſcernment, meaſures

meaſures ſhould be adopted injurious or perhaps fatal to the intereſts of the community. Of the truth of this obſervation, Archbiſhop Laud, in the laſt century, and George Grenville and Lord North, in modern times, are egregious examples. No man of penetration would have ventured to attempt ſo odious an innovation, and fraught with ſuch dangerous conſequences, as the American Stamp-Act; and ſtill leſs would a great Stateſman have adopted that wretched plan of policy which counteracted the beneficial effects of its own conceſſions, by retaining and enforcing a paltry duty as a mark of Sovereignty, when compelled to relinquiſh that hope of revenue for which alone it was ever worth while to advance the claim.

Defect of Genius is indeed the grand characteriſtic of the twelve years adminiſtration of that unfortunate Nobleman. From men of Genius only, though they will always be feared and hated by envious and little minds, can we ever rationally expect any ſeaſonable, judicious, and well-conducted plans of improvement; the danger is, as ambition is generally the ruling paſſion of ſuch men, that they will be more ſolicitous to extend and perpetuate their own authority, than to promote the glory, the intereſt and proſperity of the community. In a well regulated monarchy, however, this danger is much leſs imminent than under a republican, and particularly a democratic form of government.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It ought to humble the pride of Genius to conſider, that it is liable to fall into the greateſt ſpeculative abſurdities. Genius, joined with extenſive power, and a beneficent diſpoſition, can indeed ſcarcely fail to ſecure the happineſs, the eſteem, and the affection of mankind. Rectitude of conduct in public life, depends much more upon a quick and almoſt intuitive diſcernment of propriety, than upon long and complex trains of reaſoning; but in the cloſet, the man of Genius appears in a great meaſure to loſe his preeminence.

Human nature is ſo unequal to the inveſtigation of truth, that a mind of the higheſt powers, which ventures to confide in its own ſuperiority, is quickly loſt in a labyrinth of perplexity and error.

Truth is to be attained, as far as it is attainable by ſo weak and imperfect a being as man, by patient, laborious, and attentive conſideration; by diveſting ourſelves of paſſion and prejudice, by commencing our enquiries with doubt and diffidence, and by extending a candid and equal regard to the arguments on every ſide, and weighing them in the balance of ſtrict and impartial juſtice. The man of Genius is frequently deficient in almoſt all theſe eſſential requiſites for the diſcovery of moral truth. Full of ardour and enthuſiaſm, and elate with the conſciouſneſs of ſuperior talents, he thinks it ſuperfluous to devote that portion of time and patience to the inveſtigation

gation of truth, which its nature indiſpenſably requires. He forms his opinions with precipitation, and, when once formed, his pride is engaged to vindicate and ſupport them. As his feelings are ſtrong, and the faculty of aſſociation vigorous and powerful, his firſt opinions, originally formed on very ſlight grounds, ſoon degenerate into inveterate prejudices; and in this ſtate of mind he treats with contempt or indignation all arguments, but ſuch as have a tendency to confirm him in error; and his ſuperiority of Genius only ſerves, by ſupplying him with endleſs fallacies, to plunge him deeper and deeper into the abyſſes of abſurdity and extravagance. This is a point long ago determined by a judge, whoſe knowledge of human nature I ſuppoſe no one will venture to call in queſtion.

> None are ſo ſurely caught when they are catch'd,
> As wit turn'd fool; folly, in wiſdom hatch'd,
> Hath wiſdom's warrant, and the help of ſchool,
> And wit's own grace, to grace a learned fool.
>
> *Love's Labour Loſt.*

I have always, however, thought a man of Genius, entangled in abſurdity, an object of compaſſion, rather than of ridicule. To exult over an antagoniſt of this deſcription, is to triumph in the weakneſs of human nature. "On "doit," ſays the Marq. de Mirabeau, very generouſly, "une indulgence preſqu' illimitée aux "grands hommes quand ils ont evidemment tort."

Fourthly.

Fourthly, It is a prevailing opinion, and I think it is an opinion founded on fact, that melancholy is a very frequent attendant on Genius. How is this to be accounted for? Enthuſiaſm, or ardour of mind, is certainly a ſtriking characteriſtic of Genius: but this is a quality apparently incompatible with melancholy, which deprives the mind of every degree of force and vigour, and leaves it without any proper ſtimulus to action. The difficulty may perhaps be ſolved, by ſuppoſing that enthuſiaſm is natural to Genius, and melancholy only an accidental and adventitious quality. None are ſo liable to diſappointments in the world as men of Genius, and melancholy is the natural conſequence of diſappointment—Their feelings, too refined for their own happineſs, are wounded by neglect; ſometimes, perhaps, by inſult. Their taſte for beauty and order, is ſhocked by the ſcenes of folly, vice, and miſery, perpetually preſented to their view; the common concerns of life appear to them flat, inſipid, and unintereſting. They firſt grow weary of the world, and then of themſelves. The beſt remedy for this diſeaſe of the mind is religion; I mean that religion which is founded on reaſon and on truth, and which inſpires a firm belief in the exiſtence of an infinitely powerful, wiſe, and beneficent Being; and a full perſuaſion, that the preſent ſyſtem of things is, in all its parts, conſiſtent with the natural and moral perfections of its divine Author; and that the courſe of events is tending to a happy and glorious conſummation. This

religion,

religion, ſublimed by faith, and invigorated by hope, exacts from us, firſt, the deepeſt reverence and gratitude to God, and next, unbounded love and benevolence to mankind. It informs us, that the great object of life ought to be the advancement of human happineſs—A truly noble and animating principle of action in itſelf; but how much more ſo, when we have ground to believe, that no effort directed to this end ſhall be finally loſt. No effort wholly loſt, perhaps, with reſpect to others; and as to ourſelves, we have a divine aſſurance, that even a cup of cold water, given in the true ſpirit of Chriſtian benevolence, ſhall not fail to meet with its reward.

ESSAY XXI.

REMARKS *on* POPE'S ESSAY ON MAN.

VARIOUS and diſcordant have been the opinions of critics and commentators, reſpecting this celebrated performance. That it poſſeſſes a diſtinguiſhed ſhare of poetic excellence, none, however, I think, have yet ventured to deny. Voltaire goes ſo far as to affirm, that to this Eſſay Pope is indebted for that pre-eminence which he aſcribes to him, when compared with his illuſtrious predeceſſor, Dryden: but that Pope is actually entitled to this claim of ſuperiority, is at leaſt very problematical; and, if it was allowed, I ſhould imagine that the Rape of the Lock, the Epiſtle of Eloiſe, the Eclogue of the Meſſiah, and ſome other pieces that might be mentioned, would generally be conſidered as affording a better foundation for this claim to reſt upon, than the Eſſay on Man; in which Poetry holds a ſubordinate place, and in which it is merely employed, though with the happieſt ſucceſs, to embelliſh and illuſtrate the moſt abſtruſe leſſons of philoſophy. Dryden, indeed, has, in his Hind and Panther, given us a ſtriking

ſtriking proof of the eaſe and ſpirit with which he was able to conduct a chain of reaſoning in verſe: his tranſitions are leſs abrupt, his expreſſion leſs obſcure, and his air and manner more free and unconſtrained, than thoſe of Pope. On the other hand, in dignity of ſtile, in ſublimity of ſentiment, and in beauty and variety of poetical ornament, Pope has incomparably the advantage. In reading the Eſſay on Man, we are tempted to exclaim, with the rapture of the youth in COMUS,

> "How charming is divine philoſophy!
> Not harſh and rugged, as dull fools ſuppoſe;
> But muſical as is Apollo's lute,
> And a perpetual feaſt of nectar'd ſweets."

It is not my purpoſe, however, at preſent, to expatiate upon the poetical merits of this piece, but rather to enter into a critical, though conciſe, examination of its philoſophical principles. It is well known, that the general plan of this Eſſay was originally framed by Lord Bolingbroke; and it is univerſally believed, that Pope was ignorant of the ultimate, and, indeed, the obvious, tendency of his own arguments; and when he found that his principles were conſidered as ſubverſive of religion, he eagerly embraced the aſſiſtance of Warburton, who undertook the Herculean taſk of reſcuing them from that imputation. But, moſt undoubtedly, that ſyſtem of philoſophy which profeſſes to juſtify the ways of God to man, without having recourſe to the doctrine of a future ſtate, muſt

muſt ever be conſidered as in the higheſt degree inimical to religion; whoſe very nature and eſſence it is, to direct our views beyond the narrow limits of the preſent ſcene of exiſtence. This is a point too evident to receive confirmation from any medium of proof. I propoſe, therefore, to examine, not the utility, but the *conſiſtency*, of theſe philoſophical principles; to aſcertain the value, and weigh the force of thoſe arguments, upon which this ſyſtem of naturaliſm is founded, and from which the Poet pretends to deduce this ultimate concluſion, that,

> In ſpite of pride, in erring reaſon's ſpite,
> One truth is clear—whatever is, is right.

It is amuſing to obſerve the very different opinions entertained of this celebrated Eſſay, in this point of view, by writers of conſiderable abilities and knowledge; and who might reaſonably be ſuppoſed well qualified to form a judgment of its real merits. Dr. Johnſon, who is certainly a critic of the higheſt order, in his Life of Pope, thus delivers his ſentiments upon the ſubject: "This Eſſay "affords an egregious inſtance of the predominance of genius, the dazzling ſplendor of imagery, and the ſeductive powers of eloquence. "Never were penury of knowledge, and vulgarity "of ſentiment, ſo happily diſguiſed. The reader "feels his mind full, though he learns nothing; "and when he meets it in its new array, no longer "knows the talk of his mother and his nurſe.

"Metaphyſical morality was, to Pope, a new "ſtudy; he was proud of his acquiſitions, and "ſuppoſing himſelf maſter of great ſecrets, was in "haſte to teach what he had not learned." On the other hand, Dr. Warton, a writer of acknowledged taſte and diſcernment, affirms, that "The "Eſſay on Man is as cloſe a piece of argument, "admitting its principles, as perhaps can be found "in verſe. It is hardly to be imagined how much "ſenſe, how much thinking, how much obſervation, on human life, is condenſed together in a "ſmall compaſs."

Perhaps theſe oppoſite ſentiments may be, in ſome degree, reconciled, by ſuppoſing that the arguments of the Poet are, in themſelves, weak and futile, but that they are urged and illuſtrated with ability and addreſs. All the ſagacity and penetration of Bolingbroke, adorned with all the art and elegance of Pope, and enforced by all the power of words, cannot transform darkneſs into light, falſhood into truth, or abſurdity into ſenſe.

"Admitting its principles," ſays Dr. Warton, "the Eſſay on Man is as cloſe a piece of argument "as can be found in verſe." There is a ſenſe, undoubtedly, in which this mode of expreſſion conveys a juſt and definite idea; if we mean by it that the author advances erroneous poſtulata, but deduces juſt and legitimate concluſions from thoſe falſe principles, we may very properly ſay, that, admitting his principles, his argument is juſt: but this cannot

not be Dr. Warton's meaning; for the grand poſtulatum advanced by Pope, that God is a Being poſſeſſed of infinite perfections, is certainly a juſt principle; but he fails in his attempt to prove that the natural and moral phænomena of the univerſe are conſonant to the perfections of the divine nature: ſo that I muſt confeſs I do not underſtand the propriety, or even the meaning, of this conceſſion.—Allow his reaſonings to be juſt, and then, without doubt, it muſt be allowed that he reaſons well: but ſuppoſe another critic, leſs complaiſant than Dr. Warton, ſhould object to his mode of induction; then, I preſume, it may juſtly be affirmed that he reaſons ill. In a word, if Dr. Warton means to compliment this Eſſay, as poſſeſſing an high degree of argumentative merit, I fear he is betrayed into this falſe judgment by the Poet's ſplendor of eloquence, and pomp of declamation: if, on the other hand, he means that the reaſonings of the Eſſay are weak and inconcluſive, but that the Poet has advantageouſly exhibited, and artfully embelliſhed them, then his general idea of its merit coincides with that of Dr. Johnſon; and nothing can be objected to this deciſion, but its want of perſpicuity; for at preſent we are apparently led to conclude, that, in Dr. Warton's opinion, the Eſſay on Man is, and it is not, a good piece of argument.

Mr. Pope, in this famous Eſſay, has undertaken the mighty taſk of vindicating the ways of God to Man, in compliance, as Lord Bolingbroke himſelf informs us, with the expreſs wiſh of his noble

friend. If we conſider the very dangerous tendency of the ſyſtem of philoſophy here inculcated, it may well be ſuſpected that the original deſign, on the part of Bolingbroke, was a deep and inſidious one—Not that Pope has adopted the opinions of Bolingbroke in their full extent: he had too juſt a ſenſe of the importance of religion, and too much regard for the welfare of ſociety, not to reject them, when openly propoſed, with indignation—But they came to him diſguiſed in ſo pleaſing a form, that it cannot be thought very wonderful that a man, who had little accuſtomed himſelf to metaphyſical diſquiſitions, ſhould be allured and deceived by ſo fair and ſpecious a ſemblance. The object of Bolingbroke was, doubtleſs, to explode the commonly received opinions relative to a future ſtate. There are two very different modes by which this may be attempted. The firſt, which is Bolingbroke's own method, is to inſinuate, not only that the phyſical arguments, uſually alledged in proof of the ſoul's immortality, are wholly inconcluſive, but that the moral arguments, deduced from the conſideration of the moral attributes of the Deity, are equally deſtitute of ſolidity; becauſe thoſe attributes are themſelves deſtitute of ſatisfactory proof. The other method, which is that ſuggeſted by his Lordſhip to Pope, is to receive, as a fundamental principle, and as the baſis of farther inveſtigation, the truth of the divine attributes, natural and moral, and to affirm that the plan of Providence, actually exhibited to our view, ſo far as it is capable of being comprehended by us,

us, is, in all reſpects, conſonant to the perfections of the Divine Nature; and if ſo, we can have no more reaſon to conclude that the preſent life is connected with a future ſtate, than on that more daring hypotheſis, which abſolutely denies the exiſtence of thoſe perfections. To the firſt mode of reaſoning, which is, without doubt, of a nature much more ſubtle and perplexing than the latter, it may be anſwered, in a few words, that though a complete demonſtration of the infinity of the divine goodneſs is not to be attained, yet it is manifeſt, that good preponderates in the univerſe in a very great degree, and that the farther we carry our reſearches, the more numerous, and the more ſtriking, are the proofs we diſcover of benevolence, as well as of wiſdom and power. It is, therefore, fair to conclude, that beings of more exalted capacity would form proportionably higher conceptions of the moral, as well as natural attributes of the Supreme Being; and that, as we have reaſon to believe his power and wiſdom to be infinite, not being able to conceive more illuſtrious diſplays of thoſe attributes, than the works of creation and providence actually preſent to our view; ſo it is highly reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that the attribute of benevolence, if it exiſt at all, muſt exiſt in a manner analogous to the reſt; *i. e.* we ought to ſuppoſe it to be infinite: but if, contrary to all the principles of analogy and good ſenſe, we ſhould admit a limitation of the principle of benevolence in the Divine Mind, for which no one can pretend

to aſſign any adequate, or even any poſſible cauſe, yet a degree of wiſdom, power, and benevolence, far ſhort of infinite, would lead us to expect, in ſome future period, another and a better ſtate of things, in which the diſorders and irregularities, ſo conſpicuous at preſent, and ſo inconſiſtent with the wiſdom and goodneſs diſcoverable in the general conſtitution of the univerſe, may be redreſſed or rectified, and the ways of GOD to Man be finally and completely vindicated.

Let us now proceed to conſider the ſecond ſuppoſition, or the hypotheſis actually embraced by Mr. Pope; according to which, the belief of a future ſtate muſt be diſmiſſed from our creed, as entirely ſuperfluous; the general plan of Providence admitting, as it ſeems, of a complete vindication, independant of any viſionary or ſuperſtitious notions of this kind.

Say firſt, of GOD above, or Man below,
What can we reaſon, but from what we know?
Of Man, what ſee we but his ſtation here,
From which to reaſon, or to which refer?
Thro' worlds unnumber'd tho' the GOD be known,
'Tis ours to trace him only in our own.
He, who through vaſt immenſity can pierce,
See worlds on worlds compoſe one univerſe,
Obſerve how ſyſtem into ſyſtem runs,
What other planets circle other ſuns,
What vary'd being peoples ev'ry ſtar,
May tell why Heav'n has made us as we are, &c.

We

We cannot but feel ſome emotions of ſurprize, after the lofty language of the exordium, to ſee the Poet ſo ſoon abandon his grand deſign; and, inſtead of *offering a vindication of Providence*, content himſelf with affirming, that a being endowed with powers far ſurpaſſing human capacity, might poſſibly be able to ſucceed in this arduous undertaking. For a vindication he now thinks it expedient to ſubſtitute an apology.

> Preſumptuous Man! the reaſon would'ſt thou find,
> Why form'd ſo weak, ſo little, and ſo blind?
> Firſt, if thou canſt, the harder reaſon gueſs,
> Why form'd no weaker, blinder, and no leſs, &c.

Undoubtedly it is the height of preſumption and impiety to arraign the wiſdom and goodneſs of Divine Providence, in the formation of ſuch a creature as man; for, ſuppoſing a certain degree of happineſs imparted to a created and dependent being, how can that being have a right to claim, from its creator and benefactor, a degree of happineſs ſuperior to that actually conferred? The abſurdity and extravagance of the claim are ſelf-evident: but the queſtion to be ſolved is, whether, granting the exiſtence of ſuch an imperfect being, it is moſt conformable to our ideas of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, to ſuppoſe that after a few revolutions of the ſun, he is to ſink again into annihilation? or, as he is formed with a capacity or unlimited improvement in moral and intellec-

tual excellence, that the preſent life is only preparatory to another ſtate of exiſtence, in which he may have ample ſcope to fulfill all the wiſe and beneficent purpoſes of his creation? Certainly, if we are at liberty to argue upon the hypotheſis of a ſupreme ſuperintending intelligence, infinite in all perfections, the latter ſuppoſition muſt be, according to our ideas of wiſdom and goodneſs, far more honourable to the divine government, and therefore more conſiſtent, and more probable, than the former; but concluſions of this nature, Mr. Pope does not attempt to draw; he ſatisfies himſelf with ſaying, coldly,

> Reſpecting Man, whatever wrong we call,
> May, muſt be right, as relative to all.

This, indeed, inevitably reſults from the abſolute perfection of the divine nature; but then it is a much more ſatisfactory mode of reaſoning, according to common apprehenſion, to ſay, that God is infinitely wiſe and good; and, therefore, we have reaſon to hope for a renovation of our exiſtence, becauſe it ſeems neceſſary to the completion of a plan of perfect wiſdom and benevolence, than to argue as Mr. Pope indirectly does, that although the Deity is poſſeſſed of infinite perfections, both natural and moral, we cannot thence infer the probability of a future ſtate of exiſtence, becauſe, however inexplicable or inconſiſtent with that infinity of perfection the preſent ſcene of things, independently

independently conſidered, may appear to our bounded comprehenſion, it may, nay, muſt be right, conſidered as a part of the univerſal ſyſtem. It muſt, indeed, be acknowledged that, admitting the moral as well as natural perfections of the Deity to be infinite, we cannot abſolutely demonſtrate the reality of a future ſtate, becauſe our ignorance and inadequacy of comprehenſion, render it impoſſible for us poſitively to pronounce the total annihilation of the human race to be incompatible with even infinite wiſdom and goodneſs; but ſurely it is incompatible with ſuch ideas of infinite wiſdom and goodneſs as the imperfection of human knowledge will ſuffer us to attain; and therefore the dictates of natural reaſon direct us to a contrary concluſion; for, as Mr. Pope himſelf well obſerves——"What can we reaſon but from what we know."

Hope humbly then; with trembling pinions ſoar;
Wait the great teacher, Death; and God adore.
What future bliſs, he gives not thee to know,
But gives that Hope to be thy bleſſing now.
Hope ſprings eternal in the human breaſt;
Man never is, but always to be bleſt:
The ſoul, uneaſy, and confin'd from home,
Reſts and expatiates in a life to come.

In this paſſage Mr. Pope has, indeed, thought proper, very inconſiſtently with the general tenor of his reaſoning, to refer us to a future ſtate for a ſolution of all our doubts and difficulties. Thoſe difficulties,

difficulties, viewed in the proper light, form indeed, of themſelves, a ſtrong preſumption of a future ſtate, from their apparent incongruity with the general plan of Providence; but Mr. Pope repreſents them as in no reſpect inconſiſtent with or derogatory to the natural or moral attributes of the Divinity, and as ſufficiently accounted for by our inability to comprehend the perfect order eſtabliſhed by the great directing mind, thus ſuperſeding the neceſſity of recurring to the obſolete ſolution of a future ſtate, which is an impertinent and idle preſumption, if the preſent tranſitory ſcenes can be reconciled without any ſuch expedient to our ideas of the divine wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs; and throughout the whole Eſſay, Mr. Pope derives, from this great principle, no aſſiſtance in his attempts to vindicate the rectitude of the divine government. By a very eaſy and compendious proceſs, the Poet firſt takes it for granted, that the perfections of the Deity are infinite; and then takes it for granted, that the natural and moral phænomena of the univerſe *muſt* be conſonant to thoſe perfections.

If plagues or earthquakes break not Heav'ns deſign,
Why then a Borgia, or a Catiline?
Who knows but he, whoſe hand the light'ning forms,
Who heaves old Ocean, and who wings the ſtorms;
Pours fierce Ambition in a Cæſar's mind,
Or turns young Ammon looſe to ſcourge mankind?

Theſe

These are noble and animated lines; the argument of which they form a part, divested of poetical expression and ornament, stands thus—Objections are raised against the general order of Providence, from the consideration of the prevalence of moral evil; but if we admit that the existence of natural evil is consistent, the existence of moral evil cannot be inconsistent with the absolute perfection of the divine nature, for the same general solution will serve for both. God acts by general laws, and partial evil will necessarily result from the operation of those laws, but partial evil is universal good; and moral, as well as natural evil, may, by almighty power, be made subservient to the most salutary and beneficent purposes. It cannot be denied that the Poet so far reasons right, as his reasoning tends to prove that the existence of natural and the existence of moral evil, are difficulties of the same nature and magnitude; and whatever will serve for a solution of the one, will undoubtedly suffice for the solution of the other: but the grand difficulty still remains unsolved by the Poet, "Whence comes either?" In answer to this perplexing enquiry we are only assured, that

——— the first Almighty Cause
Acts not by partial, but by gen'ral laws.

If the speculatist asks, "What makes all physical or moral ill?" The Poet immediately replies, "There deviates nature, and here wanders will." "Pope," says

ſays Dr. Warton, "here accounts for the intro-
"duction of moral evil, from the abuſe of Man's
"free will. This is the ſolid and ſcriptural ſolu-
"tion of that grand and difficult queſtion which,
"in vain, hath puzzled and bewildered the ſpecu-
"latiſts of ſo many ages, πoθεν το κακον." It is evident, however, that neither the Poet nor Critic were actuated by the ſpirit of that celebrated antient, who, as it is ſaid, being informed, when a child, that the heavens and earth roſe out of chaos, firſt diſcovered his genius for philoſophic inveſtigation by aſking, "And chaos whence?" Why is nature ſuffered to deviate, or the will to wander? If the great end be general happineſs, and God be poſſeſſed of infinite power and wiſdom, we have a right to expect the accompliſhment of that end, by ſuch means as are adapted to produce this effect, in the higheſt poſſible degree; and to affirm, that it is conſiſtent with infinite wiſdom to ſacrifice happineſs to a particular order of nature, or to a pretended freedom of agency, is to ſuppoſe it conſiſtent with infinite wiſdom to ſacrifice the end to the means, or that which alone poſſeſſes intrinſic value, to that which is valuable only as the means of attaining it; for nothing is really valuable but as it tends to produce happineſs. If, indeed, it could be demonſtrated, that partial evil is univerſal good, or that the general happineſs is ultimately promoted by a mixture of evil, it would certainly amount to a complete vindication of the divine government; and this we know

to

to be actually the caſe, in very numerous and ſtriking inſtances daily offering themſelves to our attention; but, however imperfect this ſolution may be deemed, if we confine our obſervations to the preſent ſcene, upon the ſuppoſition of a future ſtate, the proſpect, "to reaſon's eye, "clears up apace," and we are able, through the miſts of ignorance and prejudice, to diſcern, that purpoſes highly worthy of the Omnipotent Creator, are anſwered by the introduction of evil, natural and moral, into the univerſe; and let no one dare to indulge himſelf in the practice of immorality and vice, under the vain pretext that the vices and imperfections of men are comprehended in the order of the univerſe; for it is equally true, and it can never be too deeply impreſſed upon the mind, that the puniſhment of vice is alſo an eſſential part of this divine and perfect order*.

Vaſt chain of being! which from GOD began,
Natures æthereal, human, angel, man,
Beaſt, bird, fiſh, inſect, what no eye can ſee,
No glaſs can reach; from Infinite to thee,
From thee to Nothing.—On ſuperior pow'rs
Were we to preſs, inferior might on ours;
Or in the full creation leave a void,
Where, one ſtep broken, the great ſcale's deſtroyed.

* Vide Hume's Eſſays, Vol. I. p. 151.

On

On reading the entire paſſage from whence I have tranſcribed theſe beautiful lines, I wonder not that Pope ſhould have choſen to treat this abſtruſe ſubject in a poetical form; for it muſt be confeſſed, that in humble proſe this argument would make but a very indifferent figure. To pretend to vindicate Providence in the formation of ſo imperfect a being as Man, by aſſerting, in direct terms, that if we had been advanced to an higher rank in the ſcale of creation, univerſal confuſion and anarchy muſt have enſued, and the ſyſtem of which we conſtitute a part, muſt, like the baſeleſs fabric of a viſion, have inſtantly diſſolved, could only have excited the deriſion of the atheiſtical objector; and when he adds that

> The leaſt confuſion, but in one, not all
> That ſyſtem only, but the whole muſt fall.
> Let earth unbalanc'd from her orbit fly,
> Planets and ſtars run lawleſs through the ſky:
> Let ruling Angels from their ſeats be hurl'd,
> Being on being wreck'd, and world on world:
> Heav'ns whole foundations to their centre nod,
> And Nature tremble to the throne of God.
> All this dread order break—for whom? for thee?
> Vile worm!—Oh madneſs! pride! impiety!—

he deviates into the wildeſt philoſophical rant, though it is animated and ennobled by the higheſt poetical enthuſiaſm.

> Ceaſe then, nor Order Imperfection name;
> Our proper bliſs depends on what we blame.——

Safe

Safe in the hand of one diſpoſing Pow'r,
Or in the natal, or the mortal hour.
All Nature is but Art, unknown to thee;
All Chance, Direction, which thou can'ſt not ſee;
All Diſcord, Harmony, not underſtood;
All partial Evil, univerſal Good:
And, ſpite of Pride, in erring Reaſon's ſpite,
One truth is clear, "Whatever is, is right."

I am happy at laſt to acquieſce in the ſame general concluſion with Mr. Pope, though I cannot but think that he has deduced this grand truth from very weak and inadequate premiſes. It were an eaſy, but invidious taſk, to expoſe in a much greater variety of examples, the pernicious and dangerous tendency of the general arguments offered in this famous Eſſay, for the laudable purpoſe of vindicating the honour and rectitude of God's moral government. Mr. Pope, as a moral philoſopher, is juſtly blameable for excluding that great principle of religion from his general ſyſtem, upon which the higheſt ſtreſs ought ever to be laid; and, without which, there is no eſſential or practical difference between Deiſm and Atheiſm —I mean the doctrine of a future ſtate. At the ſame time I muſt do him the juſtice to acknowledge, that his Poem abounds with ſtriking and elevated reflections, admirably calculated to excite a ſpirit of rational and philoſophical devotion; and I entertain ſo favourable an opinion of his general character as to believe, with a firm aſſurance, that

that if he had really conceived this Eſſay to be injurious to the cauſe of religion and virtue, he would have diſdained to court any increaſe of poetical fame by its publication; and, as on a former occaſion, with a noble indignation, would have exclaimed——

Oh teach me, Heaven! to ſcorn the guilty bays;
Drive from my breaſt ſuch wretched luſt of praiſe:
Unblemiſh'd let me live, or die unknown;
Oh! grant an honeſt fame, or grant me none.

ESSAY XXII.

Reflections *on the* Genius *and* Spirit *of* Christianity.

NO one who is actuated by a ſincere regard for truth, or love of virtue, can conſider Chriſtianity as an unintereſting ſubject of ſpeculation or enquiry. The evidence upon which this religion reſts I have already ſtated, and the objections to which it is liable I have endeavoured to obviate. I now propoſe to make a few general remarks upon the Genius and Spirit of this religion, with reſpect to which it differs moſt eſſentially from all other religions which have ever appeared in the world. I ſhall inſtance in the following particulars—its philanthropy, its ſimplicity, and its rationality.

Firſt, It breathes a ſpirit of ardent, of univerſal, of unlimited benevolence. This ſpirit is, indeed, not ſo properly a part, or a diſtinguiſhing feature of Chriſtianity, as the ſum and ſubſtance of it. To this great end, the ſacred writings, both apoſtolical and evangelical, evidently tend; and upon this plain and expreſs command, "Thou ſhalt love the Lord

" thy God with all thy ſoul, and thy neighbour " as thyſelf," depend both the law and the prophets. In ſhort, Chriſtianity alone, of all religions, has for its object the happineſs, preſent and future, of all mankind. So intimately blended is this ſpirit of benevolence, with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and ſo impracticable is it to eradicate from the mind the idea of this union, that, in the darkeſt ages of Popery, when Chriſtendom was ſunk in the loweſt abyſſes of ignorance and error, when the demon of fanaticiſm ſeemed to preſide over the affairs of men, and the moſt malignant and diabolical paſſions were conſecrated to the ſervice of religion, and were ſuppoſed moſt effectually to recommend mankind to the divine favour, the ultimate advancement of human happineſs was ſtill the avowed motive of thoſe actions, which were, in fact, moſt directly ſubverſive of that end. When the horrid notion was univerſally prevalent, that everlaſting miſery muſt be the inevitable lot of thoſe who were not within the pale of the Catholic Church, it is no wonder that the moſt inhuman barbarities ſhould be practiſed, even by men of tempers naturally mild and gentle, in order to enforce the profeſſion of that ſyſtem of faith, which promiſed, and which could alone enſure, future and eternal felicity. If the divine favour be inſeparably connected with the belief of certain ſpeculative opinions, and not with the practiſe of certain moral and religious duties, it is doubtleſs a proof of the higheſt regard for the true intereſts of our fellow-creatures, to take every poſſible

poſſible method of diffuſing the knowledge and belief of thoſe tenets, and of deterring, by wholeſome ſeverities, any attempts to innovate upon that ſyſtem, an entire and implicit acquieſcence in which is pronounced, by infallible authority, to be the ſole means of attaining to happineſs in a future ſtate. All virtue is founded on the baſis of utility; if, then, the torture, or even the deſtruction of the body, be neceſſary to the ſalvation of the ſoul, this diſcipline, though ſharp and rigorous, is juſt and laudable; and the rack, the ſtake, and the wheel, are all converted into the benign inſtruments of Chriſtian compaſſion. If theſe are genuine deductions, with what horror ſhould we regard the principle from which they flow! I mean, that faith, unconnected with right temper and conduct, can, in the remoteſt degree, tend to render us acceptable in the ſight of God. It is, indeed, true, and the Romiſh church has, in a manner peculiarly ſtriking, demonſtrated this truth, that faith, or right ſentiments, have a ſtrict and inſeparable connection with virtue, or right conduct; but ſtill it muſt be acknowledged, that faith is no farther valuable, than as it guides us to the love and practiſe of virtue; and that, to limit the divine favour to the belief of any ſet of ſpeculative principles, is to ſubvert the foundation of morality, and to counteract the obvious deſign of the Chriſtian revelation. Happily, the great end and object of that revelation begins to be better underſtood, and more generally acknowledged; and we ſhall, at laſt, perhaps,

become ſenſible, that our own ultimate happineſs is to be attained only by promoting, as far as our ſphere of action and influence extends, the happineſs of others; and that the general happineſs is moſt effectually promoted, by diffuſing a ſpirit of univerſal charity, of mutual forbearance, and of humble piety.

But, Secondly, Another remarkable characteriſtic of Chriſtianity, is its ſimplicity. To the utter confuſion of ſyſtems and ſyſtem-makers, and aſtoniſhing as the fact confeſſedly is, the great Founder of our religion left no records, or written memorials, reſpecting the end and object of his miſſion, for the information of poſterity. He lived a life of the moſt unexampled piety and devotion, of the moſt ardent and diſintereſted benevolence; he wrought numerous miracles in proof of the authenticity of his miſſion; he died upon the croſs, agreeably to his own prediction, and roſe again the third day, triumphantly from the grave, and aſcended into heaven, from whence he will come again at the final diſſolution of the world, in the fulneſs of divine power, to raiſe the dead to life, and to render to every man according to his works. Of theſe awful and momentous truths we are aſſured by evidence, the validity of which cannot be queſtioned, without adopting principles utterly ſubverſive of the credit of all human teſtimony; and they contain the ſum and ſubſtance of the Chriſtian revelation. It was not, however, till a conſiderable interval of time had elapſed after the death,

death, reſurrection, and aſcenſion of Chriſt, that any regular and authentic accounts were publiſhed of the principal events of his life, and tenets of his doctrine; and even then, not by any previous and expreſs commiſſion from him, but in order to gratify the anxious and laudable deſire of the numerous proſelytes to this new religion, it appears that the evangelical hiſtories were at length compiled. We have, indeed, other writings of apoſtolical authority, which, invaluable as they may juſtly be deemed, are, however, the Apocalypſe excepted, all likewiſe of an occaſional nature, written at different times, to different ſocieties of Chriſtians, upon different emergencies. Nothing, therefore, but the prophecies contained in thoſe writings, together with a few paſſages, profeſſedly penned from immediate inſpiration, appear to be, ſtrictly ſpeaking, of divine authority. The epiſtles comprized in the ſcriptural canon, breathe, indeed, a truly chriſtian and evangelical ſpirit; they are, in every reſpect, worthy of the great and venerable characters to whom they are aſcribed; but the writers certainly do not arrogate to themſelves that plenary degree of inſpiration, they do not exact that blind and implicit acquieſcence in their opinions, which is at preſent generally conceived eſſential to the exerciſe of apoſtolical authority. The Chriſtian religion ſubſiſted long before St. Paul wrote his celebrated epiſtles; and it is doing Chriſtianity mighty wrong, to deduce from thoſe epiſtles an abſtruſe ſyſtem of ſpeculative theology, and to

pronounce that ſyſtem eſſential to Chriſtianity. It is plain, that in a variety of reſpects, the apoſtles differed in opinion amongſt themſelves. Are we to attempt the prepoſterous taſk of reconciling diſcordant and contradictory opinions, becauſe each opinion, ſeparately, may plead the ſanction of apoſtolical authority? For my own part, if it were proper, in ſuch a caſe, to range under the banners of any party, I ſhould be tempted to exclaim, "I am of Paul." This great apoſtle, not only in the diſputed queſtions relative to circumciſion, meat offered to idols, &c. but in his general views, and in every part of his conduct, diſcovers a liberality and comprehenſion of mind, to which the other apoſtles appear comparatively ſtrangers. His ſtile is, indeed, harſh, abrupt, vehement, and highly rhetorical; but, with a proper allowance for the oriental magnificence of diction, which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhes the writings of this accompliſhed ſcholar of Gamaliel, even thoſe paſſages which appear moſt hard to be underſtood, reſpecting the dignity of Chriſt's nature, and the value of that ſacrifice which he offered upon the croſs, are perfectly reconcileable with the more plain and ſimple repreſentations of the evangelical hiſtorians.

But, Thirdly, Cloſely connected with the ſimplicity of the Chriſtian religion, is its rationality. What, indeed, can be imagined more agreeable to reaſon, than the grand and leading articles of the Chriſtian faith?—That there exiſts one ſupreme God, infinite in all perfections, the fountain of being

being and of happineſs; that the whole ſeries of events, conſequently, is under the guidance of unerring Rectitude and Wiſdom; that the preſent life is intended as a ſtate of trial and probation; and that mankind, by progreſſive improvements in moral excellence, may render themſelves capable of participating in the refined and ſpiritual pleaſures of a future ſtate; that Chriſt was delegated from heaven, to aſcertain and to publiſh this grand fact, reſpecting a connection between the preſent and a future ſtate of exiſtence, and that he will appear a ſecond time, to judge the world in righteouſneſs. Are theſe doctrines hard to be underſtood, or hard to be believed? They are not, indeed, truths which unaſſiſted reaſon could ever demonſtrate; therefore ſome perſons who are the avowed enemies, and, ſtrange as it may ſeem, others, who are the avowed friends of Chriſtianity, have not ſcrupled to aſſert, that the doctrines of revelation are contrary to reaſon, or, in other words, that they are irrational and abſurd: this charge, or this conceſſion, is, however, founded on a groſs and palpable ſophiſm. If, for a moment, we could ſuppoſe, that a Newton had never exiſted, and that the true ſyſtem of the univerſe had been diſcovered by ſupernatural illumination, would that ſyſtem have been deemed irrational, becauſe human reaſon would, in that caſe, have been unequal to the diſcovery of the truths demonſtrated by that illuſtrious philoſopher? Though plauſible, and, as it now appears, well-founded, conjectures

were formed, reſpecting the moral attributes, and moral government of the Deity, in the one caſe, and reſpecting the true ſyſtem of the univerſe, in the other, we could never have attained to moral certainty, as to the former, or to mathematical demonſtration, as to the latter, without the aid of ſupernatural illumination, or of ſuch a ſtupendous ſuperiority of genius, as fell ſcarcely ſhort of it. But are theſe diſcoveries, therefore, to be branded as irrational? Surely the diſgrace of irrationality can belong only to thoſe who are daring enough to advance, or weak enough to admit, ſo impudent and groundleſs an accuſation. The truth is, that the doctrines of Chriſtianity were always agreeable to reaſon; *i. e.* to abſtract truth and rectitude, and were always, probably, known to be ſo, by beings of a higher rank in the ſcale of creation than man. Nevertheleſs, before they were actually revealed, there was a ſenſe in which it might, without impropriety, be ſaid, that they were not agreeable to reaſon; *i. e.* to human reaſon; becauſe, in that ſtate of fluctuation and uncertainty which ſubſiſted previous to the incarnation of the Meſſiah, notwithſtanding ſome appearances to the contrary, the weight of evidence appeared, upon the whole, to preponderate in favour of that gloomy hypotheſis, which pronounced death to be the total and final extinction of being. An elegant writer, whoſe religious opinions ſeem to be as extraordinary as his ſentiments reſpecting government, upon which I have elſewhere taken the liberty to animadvert, has, however,

ever, thought proper to cenſure, without reſerve, and in a very high tone, thoſe pretended Chriſtians, as he pleaſes to ſtile them, who have the preſumption to aſſert, and even, as he might have added, the aſſurance to demonſtrate, the reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity.—" To prove the reaſon-" ableneſs of a revelation, is, in fact, to deſtroy " it," ſays this champion of revelation. If this is admitted, it muſt be owned, that the credit of revelation is, indeed, in a very critical and alarming ſtate; for, upon this ground, the only mode of proving it credible, is to prove it to be unreaſonable; and, I preſume, arguing *a fortiori*, the more unreaſonable the more credible, till at laſt we ſhall happily arrive at that famous concluſion, which Mr. J——s doubtleſs will allow to be of itſelf a ground of aſſent, amounting to intuitive certainty.—" Credo quia impoſſibile eſt." But as the Eſſay, in which the ſubject of rational Chriſtianity is diſcuſſed by Mr. J——s, is extremely curious, I ſhall take the liberty of ſelecting from it a few paſſages for the amuſement of the reader. He commences this entertaining diſquiſition by complaining, that " ſeveral learned and ingenious " writers have undertaken the arduous taſk of re-" velation and reaſon; for which purpoſe they " have, as he affirms, with inconſiderate raſhneſs, " expunged every divine declaration which agrees " not exactly with their own notions of truth and " rectitude; and this they have attempted by no " other means, than by abſurd explanations, or by

" by bold aſſertions that they are not there; as " ſome philoſophers have ventured to deny the " exiſtence of matter, for no other reaſon than " becauſe they find in it properties which they are " unable to account for." To what particular writers Mr. J—— alludes in this paragraph, I will not venture to form any conjecture; but whoever they may be, I muſt beg leave to obſerve in their favour, that they ſeem, " with caution bold;" becauſe, when they begin with expunging theſe obnoxious paſſages, they may, doubtleſs, very ſafely, as well as boldly, aſſert, that they are not there: but the very exiſtence of theſe paſſages is denied, it ſeems, upon the ſame principle on which ſome philoſophers have denied the exiſtence of matter, " becauſe they find in it properties which they are unable to account for." Now this is a reaſon which I will venture to affirm, no philoſopher or theologiſt ever thought of offering in his own vindication; and the diſcovery of it, therefore, muſt exhibit the uncommon ſagacity of Mr. J—— in a moſt ſtriking point of view. Thoſe philoſophers who call in queſtion the exiſtence of matter, think themſelves able to account for its phyſical properties, or for the actual phænomena of nature in another mode, which they deem more ſatisfactory, and leſs perplexing, than the commonly received hypotheſis; and thoſe divines alſo, who have the preſumption to explain a controverted paſſage in a ſenſe different from the ſenſe of Mr.

Mr. J——, "find in it properties," which they imagine themſelves better able to account for by adopting a rational, than an irrational interpretation; though Mr. J—— may ſtill enjoy the ſatisfaction of thinking, that the irrational ſenſe bids faireſt for being the true ſenſe of the paſſage. "Thus," continues Mr. J——, "they have reduced Chriſ-"tianity to a mere ſyſtem of ethics, and retain no "part of it but the moral, which is in fact no "characteriſtic part of it at all; as this, though in "a manner leſs perfect, makes a part of every re-"ligion which has ever appeared in the world." That morality makes a part of every religion which has ever appeared in the world, is true; but then, the rational Chriſtian deems, with higher reverence than Mr. J—— ſeems to do, of the difference between Pagan and Chriſtian morality: but the principal ſtreſs is by the Rationaliſt placed on conſiderations, which do not appear even to have occurred to Mr. J——; I mean, on thoſe aweful ſanctions by which that pure and perfect ſyſtem of morality is guarded—ſanctions reſulting from the nature and attribates of the Deity, and that fundamental, or, to uſe the expreſſion of Mr. J——, that *characteriſtic* part of Chriſtianity, the doctrine of a future reſurrection.

"During the laſt century," as Mr. J—— informs us, "the faſhionable philoſophers were, for the moſt "part, Atheiſts, who aſcribed every thing to "chance, fate, or neceſſity, excluſive of all intelli-"gence and deſign. Theſe mighty giants, who fought

"againſt

" againſt heaven, being at length overthrown by " the abſurdity of their own principles, and the " ſuperior abilities of their adverſaries, retreated, " about the beginning of the preſent, to the more " tenable fort of Deiſm; but here again, being " frequently worſted, they at laſt took ſhelter un- " der the covert-way of rational Chriſtianity, where " they now make their ſtand, and attack revela- " tion with leſs odium and more ſucceſs, than from " the open plains of profeſſed Deiſm." This whole paragraph is penned with ſuch felicity of diction, that one cannot, without ſome degree of reluctance, remark, that elegance of compoſition is its only merit; for it ſo happens, that the faſhionable philoſophers of the laſt century were, for the moſt part, not Atheiſts, but Deiſts. It is well known, in particular, that Lord Herbert of Cherbury, the celebrated Harrington, Sir William Temple, Mr. Blount, Mr. Hobbes, and Mr. Toland, were profeſſed Deiſts; and the inſinuation that, as Atheiſm gradually ſubſided into Deiſm, ſo Deiſm is at laſt abſorbed in a pretended converſion to rational Chriſtianity, is equally unfortunate; for open and avowed Deiſm is certainly at leaſt as prevalent now, as at any former period: and it is ſurely as bad a compliment to Chriſtianity itſelf, as to ſome of its moſt learned and reſpectable advocates, to ſuppoſe, as Mr. J—— evidently does, that all the attempts of thoſe able writers to defend and to demonſtrate the reaſonableneſs of it, are to be regarded as ſo many poſitive proofs that they are not in earneſt.

It

It was formerly allowed to be no contemptible joke, to maintain with a face of gravity, that "Chriſtianity is *not* founded on argument;" but Mr. J—— is now deſirous, for the honour of Chriſtianity, to turn the tables upon the author of that famous aſſertion; and in future, it ſeems, it is to be conſidered as a mere exerciſe of pleaſantry to maintain, that Chriſtianity *is* founded on argument. "So adverſe, however," Mr. J——informs us, "is "Chriſtianity to all the principles of human rea- "ſon, that if brought before her tribunal, it muſt "inevitably be condemned by ſo incompetent a "judge. If we give no credit to its divine autho- "rity, any attempt to reconcile them is uſeleſs; "and if we believe it, preſumptuous in the higheſt "degree. A revelation implies information of "ſomething which reaſon cannot diſcover, and "therefore muſt be ſomething different from its "deductions, or it would be no revelation." That any attempt to reconcile reaſon and revelation, while we deny the divine authority of the latter, muſt be ſuperfluous, is indeed ſelf-evident; but that ſuch an attempt, in thoſe who acknowledge the authority of revelation, is the higheſt preſumption, is an aſſertion which I ſhould have expected only from a Papiſt, pleading in defence of tranſubſtantiation: and it is a moſt contemptible quibble, to pretend that the doctrines of revelation muſt neceſſarily be contrary to the dictates of reaſon, merely becauſe they contain truths which reaſon could not diſcover. The deductions

ductions of reaſon muſt be founded on ſuch evidence as we poſſeſs.—"What can we reaſon but "from what we know?" But there are truths of the higheſt importance, for which mankind, previous to the promulgation of Chriſtianity, did not poſſeſs ſatisfactory evidence—clear and ſatisfactory proof, however, is now obtained; therefore it may juſtly be affirmed, that propoſitions, which two thouſand years ago might be pronounced contrary, are now perfectly conſonant, to the concluſions of reaſon. Nor is there, ſurely, ſo much of myſtery in this, as to puzzle any man of common ſenſe. It is plain, that in the former caſe, contrariety to reaſon can only mean contrariety to the light of reaſon; or, in other words, divinely excellent as the doctrines of the goſpel are, we were not ſufficiently warranted, by the unaſſiſted light of reaſon, to believe them to be *true:* but ſubſequent evidence having aſcertained the truth of theſe doctrines, they may now be pronounced, in both ſenſes of the expreſſion, conſonant to reaſon; for they are not only agreeable to the law of reaſon, *i. e.* to abſtract truth, wiſdom, and rectitude, but to the light of reaſon, which, by the aid of additional evidence, is happily enabled to diſcern that to be conformable to abſtract truth, which unaſſiſted reaſon could only expreſs an unavailing wiſh, an almoſt hopeleſs deſire, to find ſo. "But," ſays Mr. J——, "the writers of the New Teſta-"ment frequently declare, that the religion which "they teach is a myſtery. What, then, is this "myſtery?

" myſtery? Not the moral precepts of the goſpel;
" for they are no more a myſtery than the Ethics
" of Ariſtotle, or the offices of Cicero: the my-
" ſtery conſiſts alone in theſe very doctrines which
" the Rationaliſt explodes, becauſe they diſagree
" with the concluſions of his reaſon; that is, be-
" cauſe they are myſteries, as they are avowed to
" be by thoſe who taught them." It is true that the Chriſtian revelation is frequently ſtiled a myſtery in the apoſtolical writings, and with great propriety, becauſe it contains doctrines which could never be diſcovered by the light of reaſon; but it is never affirmed, or intimated, that thoſe doctrines, when revealed, ſtill continue to be myſteries. The contrary is ſtrongly implied in the very paſſage quoted by Mr. J——, in ſupport of his aſſertion: " Having made known to us," ſays St. Paul, " the myſtery of his will;" when the divine will was made known, it is evident it could no longer be deemed a myſtery. So the ſame apoſtle ſpeaks of " the myſtery which was hid from ages and
" generations, but which is now made manifeſt;"
which myſtery he declares to be " Chriſt in us,
" the hope of glory." Mr. J——, however, in his great zeal to eſtabliſh faith on the ruins of reaſon, labours to prove, though, happily, with very ill ſucceſs, that there is a real contrariety between them. " For inſtance, reaſon tells us,
" that a Creator, infinitely powerful and good,
" could never permit any evil, natural or moral,
" to have a place in his works; becauſe his
" goodneſs

" goodneſs muſt induce him, and his power en-
" able him to exclude them. Again, reaſon
" aſſures us that ſufferings, though they may be
" juſt puniſhments for paſt crimes, and a means
" to prevent them for the future, can never be
" compenſations for them; much leſs can the ſuf-
" ferings of one being atone for the guilt of an-
" other." As to the firſt inſtance, I deny that reaſon ever made any ſuch falſe declaration, as that a Creator, infinitely powerful and good, could never permit the exiſtence of evil natural or moral. Whatever may be the degree of happineſs imparted to finite beings, it muſt neceſſarily be finite; and a ſyſtem in which a mixture of evil is combined with a predominance of happineſs, is juſt as eaſily reconcileable to infinite power and goodneſs, as a ſyſtem of pure and unmixed happineſs inferior in kind or degree: and reaſon affords many arguments which render it highly probable, that happineſs is upon the whole moſt effectually promoted by the introduction of evil into the univerſe: ſo that reaſon and faith are by no means at variance, as Mr. J—— pretends, with reſpect to this point. And as to his ſecond inſtance, though I readily allow that reaſon aſſures us, the ſufferings of one being can never be compenſations for the crimes of another, I cannot admit any oppoſition between reaſon and revelation in this caſe; becauſe I cannot find a ſingle declaration in ſcripture which affirms the contrary. Reaſon and revelation concur, indeed, in aſſerting that the ſufferings of one being

being may be the means of procuring or of communicating happineſs to others; and the ſufferings and death of Chriſt afford a ſignal and ſtupendous inſtance of this remarkable truth—a truth, confirmed by unvarying teſtimony and univerſal experience.

" Of all men who are called Chriſtians," ſays Mr. J——, " the Rationaliſt ſeems to have leaſt " pretence to that denomination; he is no leſs " adverſe to the Spirit than to the letter of this reli- " gion. The true Chriſtian is humble, teachable, " and diffident; the Rationaliſt is aſſuming, obſti- " nate, and ſelf-ſufficient." If theſe are the genuine characteriſtics of the Rationaliſt, Mr. J—— would certainly have ſhown more diſcretion, had he been leſs laviſh of his cenſures; for he may very eaſily chance to be miſtaken for a Rationaliſt himſelf, after all the pains he has taken to eſcape the imputation of rationality. Mr. J—— concludes with the following declaration: " I blame no one for want of faith, " but for want of ſincerity; not for being no " Chriſtian, but for pretending to be one, " without believing. The profeſſed Deiſt gives " Chriſtianity fair play; if ſhe cannot defend " herſelf, let her fall; but the rational Chriſ- " tian aſſaſſinates her in the dark: the firſt " attacks Chriſt, as did the multitude, with " ſwords and ſtaves; the latter, like Judas, " betrays him with a kiſs." Want of ſincerity,

is indeed a very weighty and ſerious accuſation; it is not only blameable, but highly criminal; and without the ſtrongeſt evidence, ſhould not be imputed to any man. But upon what grounds does Mr. J—— charge that claſs of Chriſtians with inſincerity, whoſe boaſt and happineſs it is to believe the religion of Chriſt to be a reaſonable ſervice? and ſome of whom have given proofs of their ſincerity, little ſhort of laying down their lives for the ſake of it. Who is this, then, that dares to uſurp the prerogative of GOD; and aſſumes, unauthorized, and unqualified, the office of judge and ſearcher of hearts?—Raſh and inconſiderate mortal! Know'ſt thou not that thou muſt thyſelf ſtand at the ſame awful bar with thoſe whom thou haſt thus vilified, arraigned, and condemned? and when impleaded at that high tribunal, who ſhall tell thy audit? Want of candour and charity, is, in my apprehenſion, a crime of no leſs magnitude than want of ſincerity; and he who ſcruples not to brand ſuch men as a Jebb, a Lindſey, or a Prieſtley, with inſincerity, becauſe their ideas of Chriſtianity differ widely from his own, may be aſſured that he has imbibed but little of that divine Spirit of Chriſtian benevolence, without which, though he ſpeak with the tongue of men and of angels, though he underſtand all myſteries, and all knowledge, though he have faith ſo that he could remove mountains, though he beſtow all his goods

goods to feed the poor, and even though he devote his body to the flames, to gain the glorious crown of martyrdom, he has lived in vain, and all theſe ſplendid diſtinctions will profit him nothing.

ESSAY XXIII.

On the AFRICAN SLAVE TRADE.

THERE are ſome truths which all mankind agree to regard as firſt principles; the clearneſs and certainty of them are ſuch as preclude even the poſſibility of a doubt; and all attempts, therefore, to eſtabliſh or confirm them by argument, are not only ſuperfluous, but abſurd and ridiculous; and we laugh, without ſcruple, at the Philoſopher who gravely exclaims, "Cogito ergo "ſum." There are other truths of great magnitude and importance, which cannot indeed properly be ſtiled ſelf-evident; for they are capable of being oppoſed, and of being ſupported by argument; but the arguments, on the one ſide, are ſo obvious and convincing, and on the other, ſo weak and futile, that candour itſelf cannot, without difficulty, believe the moſt ignorant and prejudiced of mankind incapable of diſcerning the diſparity. The queſtion relating to the African Slave Trade, conſidered either in a civil or a moral view, may be adduced as an inſtance exactly

exactly in point. It is so flagrant and enormous a violation of the most sacred and fundamental laws of justice and humanity, it so evidently sets at defiance all those obligations which result from the nature of civil society, and the unalterable principles of equitable and legitimate government, that one cannot, without astonishment and indignation, view the necessity of entering into a regular discussion of the question, and of formally exhibiting a train of arguments, in order to prove this horrible traffic to be the height of moral and political depravity. The famous Abbé Terrai, Comptroller of the Finances in France, during the latter part of the reign of Lewis XV. on being informed that a certain iniquitous measure, proposed by him, was universally condemned as highly oppressive and unjust, replied coolly, "Who pre-"tends that it is just?" This may be stiled the magnanimity of villainy. That abandoned Minister at least was not guilty of the crime of lowering the standard of moral rectitude, and of endeavouring to debase the sentiments of mankind to a level with his own practice: but the advocates for the Slave Trade do not rest satisfied with practical villainy; they are ambitious of distinguishing themselves by a speculative attachment to it. Rather than renounce an hypothesis which they are interested to maintain, they would reverse the general order of the universe, and the constitution of nature. They would fain persuade us, that virtue may subsist, though it is not nourished with

the milk of human kindneſs; and that vice does not conſiſt in cruelty, rapine, treachery, and violence. It is not my preſent purpoſe to enter expreſsly into the conſideration of thoſe arguments which demonſtrate the contrariety of this practice to the firſt and plaineſt principles of moral and political rectitude. They have been repeatedly urged, with irreſiſtible force, by writers of diſtinguiſhed merit, in various recent publications. I mean to offer only a few remarks on the pleas which are uſually advanced in defence or extenuation of this outrage againſt the common rights of humanity.

Firſt, It is alledged, that "the Negroes are an "inferior and ſubordinate race of men; and it is, "therefore, allowable to treat them as ſuch, "without incurring the imputation of cruelty and "injuſtice." What! to borrow the language of Shylock, "Hath not a Negroe eyes, hands, "organs, dimenſions, ſenſes, affections, paſſions? "fed with the ſame food, hurt with the ſame "weapons, ſubject to the ſame diſeaſes, healed "by the ſame means, warmed and cooled by the "ſame Winter and Summer that a Chriſtian is?" Say, ye profound Philoſophers, ye enlightened Sages, who inhabit the ſhores of Merſey and of Avon, by what medium of proof have you diſcovered and aſcertained the intellectual inferiority of this devoted race? Will you venture to affirm, that the inhabitants of Africa are, at preſent, in a ſtate of greater inferiority, compared with you,

you, their high and mighty lords; *you* who hold ſo conſpicuous and ſo honourable a rank amongſt rational and intelligent beings, than your anceſtors, the Ancient Britons, compared with the Romans of the Auguſtan age? But ſuppoſing this to be the caſe, their inferiority only gives them an additional claim to your indulgence and protection. That the power implies the right of oppreſſion, is a diſcovery in political morality worthy of ſuch ſagacious and profound inveſtigators of the natural rights of mankind, as the Lockes, the Blackſtones, and the Monteſquieus, trading to the coaſt of Guinea.

Secondly, The Slave Trade, *mirabile dictu*, is gravely vindicated on the principles of humanity, as being highly beneficial to thoſe who are apparently the victims of it; for they are affirmed to be principally compoſed of priſoners of war, who would, in all probability, be ſlaughtered in cold blood, if their enemies were deprived of this more advantageous mode of diſpoſing of them. What! is it then the voice of humanity that we hear pleading in defence of a practice, the very idea of which muſt excite, in every breaſt ſuſceptible of the feelings of humanity, amazement and horror! View yon veſſel, with ſails expanded, ploughing the deep.—Contemplate for a moment the ſcene which it exhibits.—Within that receptacle of human miſery, are contained hundreds of beings, poſſeſſing paſſions and feelings congenial to thine own.—Behold them bereft of every enjoy-

ment which can render life a bleſſing; expoſed to every outrage which can render exiſtence a curſe.

> Dire is the toſſing, deep the groans! Deſpair,
> Sending the ſick, buſieſt from couch to couch;
> And over them triumphant Death his dart
> Shakes, but delays to ſtrike, tho' oft invok'd
> With vows; as their chief good and final hope.

Is this the ſcene which humanity delights to view, or is it a ſcene at which ſhe recoils and ſtands aghaſt? Let not then that ſacred name be profaned, and wreſted to purpoſes abhorrent from its nature. — No; it is hypocriſy which aſſumes the garb of humanity, and "which hides "the dagger underneath the gown." If a more ſpecific anſwer to this inſidious plea be required, let theſe pretended advocates for humanity be told that the wars, which croud their ſhips with Slaves, have chiefly originated, and will for ever be perpetuated, by the proſpect of advantage, which the ſale of the priſoners affords. Let them be told, that amongſt the moſt ſavage and barbarous nations, the practice of indiſcriminate ſlaughter in cold blood never habitually obtained. But, at all events, if the perſonal happineſs or benefit of the Slave is, indeed, the primary object of the Slave Merchant, certainly thoſe philanthropiſts who engage in this traffic, from ſuch noble and generous motives, muſt conſider the previous conſent of the Slave as abſolutely neceſſary to give validity to the purchaſe:

purchaſe: if, therefore, he quits his native country voluntarily, what occaſion for whips, and racks, and chains, to enforce obedience and ſubmiſſion? But it is an inſult to common ſenſe to purſue this argument farther. To devote to miſery and ruin, hecatombs of guiltleſs human victims, for the pretended purpoſe of preventing ſome poſſible evil, or of obtaining ſome poſſible good, is, in a being ſo limited in his comprehenſion as man, a mode of conduct proceeding from the moſt impious preſumption, or frantic folly.

Thirdly, Another argument, of nearly the ſame complexion with the former, is this, that though the forcible ſeizure of the Negroes is an act of injuſtice, yet the injury done them is really ſlight, as they enjoy a degree of happineſs in their ſtate of bondage, little, if at all, inferior to that which they poſſeſſed in their native country. Haughty and unfeeling tyrant! whoſe heart has long been callous to all the ſenſibilities which diſtinguiſh and which ennoble humanity; in vain would the miſerable beings, ſubject to thy dominion, complain to thee of the pangs they felt when, with reverted eyes, they caſt the laſt long lingering look upon their native ſhores! Engroſſed by one fatal paſſion, the rage of accumulating wealth, how canſt thou ſympathize with the emotions excited by the various relations of ſocial and domeſtic life? "by all the charities of father, "ſon, and brother?"—Untaught to weep with thoſe that weep, thy mind poſſeſſes no congenial feelings

feelings with thoſe whoſe miſeries have, in thy eſtimation, degraded them almoſt below the condition of humanity. Regarding them as belonging to the brutal, rather than the intelligent creation, perhaps, in the exceſs of your goodneſs, you permit them ſuch accommodations as nature, thus deplorably degraded, may require. You hear, indeed, the noiſe of the laſh reſounding in your ears, accompanied with the groans and ſhrieks of the wretched ſufferers; but this diſturbs not your repoſe; for you too well know the utility, nay, what you ſtile the neceſſity of employing it; and the hidden anguiſh of the heart, the complicated woe which bids defiance to the power of language, the ſilent agony which pervades and overwhelms every faculty of the ſoul, eſcape your notice, or are thought unworthy of your attention: they are pronounced to be the effects of obſtinacy, of ſullenneſs, of malice, or revenge; and the whip muſt be applied in order to enforce ſome degree of corporeal exertion; and by inflicting excruciating torture on the body, ſome relief, perhaps, is unintentionally afforded to the more dreadful torture of the mind. If, however, this is only rhetorical exaggeration; if it is indeed true, that a ſtate of ſlavery is a ſtate of happineſs; if thoſe who are originally reduced to this ſtate by violence, become eaſily and ſpeedily reconciled to it, let the Colonial Legiſlatures, merely for the ſatisfaction of the world, and for the complete refutation of thoſe accuſations which ſo deeply affect

affect their public character and conduct, enact a law, that every Negroe, who declares himself diſſatisfied with his ſituation, ſhall not only be immediately emancipated, but conveyed back to his native country, at the public charge. This is bringing the matter to a fair iſſue; and, if none, or if only a ſmall proportion of thoſe to whom this offer is made, think it deſerving of their acceptance, then, and not till then, will I acknowledge the native of Africa to be a being of a different and ſubordinate ſpecies to the man who preſumes to call himſelf his owner; then, and not till then, will I acknowledge that thoſe principles which we regard as the baſis of the common rights of humanity, are, as to him, wholly inapplicable, and entirely void of any juſt foundation.

Fourthly, It is farther alledged, in vindication of this deteſtable commerce, that, however great the ſufferings of the wretched Africans may be, they are fully compenſated by the ineſtimable advantage of poſſeſſing, though in a ſtate of ſlavery, the means of inſtruction in the principles of the true religion. From ignorant heathens they have an opportunity of becoming enlightened Chriſtians; and ſlavery itſelf is ſaid to be a ſtate which Chriſtianity pronounces neither unlawful nor inexpedient. This argument I regard as an impious and cruel mockery. It is to add the higheſt inſult to the higheſt injury. Allowing this fable of converſion to be a fact, can it change the nature of thoſe acts of ſavage violence for which this pretended

tended converſion is to atone? But the fact notoriouſly is, that the planters are almoſt univerſally averſe to the converſion of their ſlaves. In conſequence of the laudable and unremitted efforts of a few exalted characters, ſome proſelytes have indeed been made; and great muſt be their aſtoniſhment, when they attained to a competent knowledge of Chriſtianity, to find the practice of Chriſtians ſo oppoſite to its dictates. Openly and avowedly to violate all ſanctions, human and divine, for the purpoſe of converting heathens into Chriſtians, would be carrying fanaticiſm to the higheſt pitch of religious frenzy; and to pretend to act with that view, when we are wholly influenced by ſelf-intereſted motives, is the vileſt and moſt deteſtable ſpecies of hypocriſy. It is poſſible that heathens, in ſuch a caſe, may eventually become Chriſtians; but thoſe Chriſtians, who practice ſuch methods of converſion, are themſelves in a ſtate infinitely worſe than heatheniſm. As to the plea, that Chriſtianity does not condemn ſlavery as unlawful, it can never be ſeriouſly urged, but by thoſe who are ſtrangers to the genius and ſpirit of Chriſtianity. The ſublime object which that religion has in view, is the happineſs, preſent and future, of the whole human race: but it is to be remarked, that Chriſtianity only inculcates general principles, and leaves the application of them to our own underſtandings, which are indeed, when properly cultivated, fully adequate to that purpoſe. Benevolence is the grand,

grand, the characteriſtic virtue of a Chriſtian; but there are a thouſand different modes of bringing that virtue into action, which are not diſtinctly ſpecified in the ſacred writings. We find, indeed, admirable directions for our conduct in a great variety of reſpects; but then thoſe directions reſulted from the occaſional application of thoſe general principles to particular caſes, according to the diſcretion of the ſeveral writers. There is no proper limitation of benevolence, as an active principle, but the impracticability of its farther extenſion; and if we, who ſo juſtly and highly venerate the characters and writings of the apoſtles, ſhould however be enabled, by means of that ſuperiority of light and knowledge which, in ſome reſpects, we undoubtedly enjoy, to apply this grand principle to caſes which did not occur to them, we act in a manner perfectly conformable to the genius and ſpirit of Chriſtianity, though the authority of a poſitive precept may be wanting. St. Paul, probably, had no idea of a ſtate of civil ſociety, in which the ſpirit of liberty would operate to the total annihilation of the very condition of ſlavery. He contented himſelf, therefore, with giving directions worthy of an apoſtle, for the religious conduct of maſters and ſervants, under actually exiſting circumſtances; but enlightened Chriſtians in the preſent age, well know that ſlavery may be, and in many Chriſtian countries has, in fact, been totally aboliſhed, not only with ſafety, but with real advantage to

ſociety,

ſociety, and a great increaſe of the general happineſs: they, therefore, juſtly condemn the ſtate itſelf as inconſiſtent with the ſpirit of Chriſtianity, though in peculiar circumſtances private Chriſtians may, perhaps, juſtifiably acquieſce in a ſtate of things which it is not in the power of individuals to alter. But the evils attending the Slave Trade are of a nature very different, and of a far greater magnitude than thoſe which neceſſarily reſult from the mere condition of ſlavery. In no ſtate of ſociety can a practice, involving in it circumſtances of ſuch atrocious and enormous guilt, be conſidered as defenſible by any perſon whoſe underſtanding is not darkened by the turpitude of his heart; in whom not only the feelings of the moral ſenſe are extinguiſhed, but, in this inſtance at leaſt, every ray even of common ſenſe.

Fifthly, The Slave Trade is defended on the ground of political neceſſity. Many affect to commiſerate the unhappy condition of the *poor Negroes*, and to lament the continuance of a practice, which they allow to be founded on manifeſt injuſtice; but, however exceptionable the Slave Trade may be, in a moral view, the political neceſſity of the caſe, ſay they, renders it impoſſible to effect any eſſential alterations in a ſyſtem now eſtabliſhed by the preſcription of ages. The plantations in the Weſt Indies can be cultivated only by Negroes; the climate is fatal to all but African conſtitutions, and the labour ſuch as that

that hardy race of men only can ſupport; but any regulations, for the purpoſe of preventing actual or poſſible abuſes, they profeſs themſelves anxious to adopt and to enforce. This is the language of thoſe who wiſh much to be virtuous, but more to be rich; of thoſe who honour humanity with their lips, but whoſe hearts are ſtrangers to its divine influence. The political inconveniencies which may reſult from the abolition of the Slave Trade, may indeed be plauſibly urged, as a motive for acting with proper caution and deliberation, as an argument againſt a precipitate annihilation of a commerce, which has been ſo long practiſed that its immediate and total ſuppreſſion might poſſibly be productive of greater evil than the continuance of it, for a limited time, under certain reſtrictions: but ſeriouſly to maintain that the moſt ſacred moral obligations ought to be ſuperſeded by mere political conſiderations, is an aſſertion the extravagance of which renders every attempt at confutation ſuperfluous. I ſhall, therefore, content myſelf with obſerving, that the dangers to be apprehended from the abolition of this infamous traffic are not, by any means, ſo great as theſe intereſted politicians ſeem to imagine. Numerous and well-authenticated facts inconteſtably demonſtrate that, with mild and indulgent treatment, the preſent number of Slaves in the Weſt-India Iſlands, might not only be preſerved from diminution, but would admit of conſiderable increaſe; that there is reaſon to believe, that even a gradual

a gradual emancipation of the Slaves would be attended with much benefit to the planter; that the Quakers have actually made the experiment with ſucceſs; and that univerſal experience proves the ſoil of every country to be moſt advantageouſly improved and cultivated by the voluntary labours of the native inhabitants; and could we even ſuppoſe the poſſibility of ſuch a dreadful calamity as the eventual riſe of Muſcovado ſugars a few ſhillings in the hundred weight, in conſequence of the additional expence of culture, it is plain that neither the proprietor, the planter, or the merchant, have any juſt ground of alarm, for the loſs muſt neceſſarily fall upon the public, who, to their great honour, ſeem perfectly well diſpoſed to ſuſtain, with fortitude, whatever inconvenience may be incurred in conſequence of the annihilation of a branch of commerce now become the object of public execration. As to any regulations which may be propoſed, in order to effect a reformation of the abuſes attending this commerce, it is obvious to reply, that the trade itſelf is an abuſe, the moſt enormous of all abuſes, the moſt atrocious of all crimes. To enact a law, therefore, for regulating, *i. e.* for eſtabliſhing the Slave Trade, and for preventing the abuſes attending it, would be an abſurdity in morals and in legiſlation, as monſtrous as to paſs an act, authorizing theft, murder, and adultery, adding at the ſame time, certain proviſions to obviate the abuſes that might poſſibly attend the habitual commiſſion of

of thoſe practices. This is a caſe which diſdains all offers of conceſſion, all attempts at amicable accommodation. In fact, what object of importance could be gained by any ſyſtem of commercial regulation which the warmeſt advocates of theſe devoted victims could deviſe? Would they not ſtill be infamouſly robbed of all that can ſoothe and compenſate the cares and ſorrows of life? Would they not ſtill be doomed to ſuffer, in a foreign land, all that the rage and malice of the petty deſpots, whoſe property they become, may prompt them to inflict? "The world is not their friend, nor "the world's law;" nor, indeed, is it poſſible that any law ſhould be effectual for the protection of thoſe who are utterly deſtitute of the proper means of enforcing it.

Laſtly, it is urged, that the abolition of this traffic would deprive of the means of ſubſiſtence, a numerous body of artizans and manufacturers, who are now employed in fabricating thoſe articles of commerce which are exported to Africa, for the purchaſe of the Slaves annually imported into the Colonies. In our attempts to relieve one ſpecies of diſtreſs, we ſhould undoubtedly endeavour to guard, as much as poſſible, againſt the creation of another; and of this argument I allow the weight, as tending to evince the *impolicy* of an immediate and unconditional abolition of the Slave Trade; and it is in vain to expect that, upon the principles of natural juſtice alone, this queſtion will be decided. If, however,

a plan was framed, and it would not, ſurely, be very difficult to deviſe a plan, for the gradual extinction of this horrid commerce, the ſupernumerary artizans and manufacturers at home, would have leiſure and opportunity to apply themſelves by degrees to other kinds of employment; and, if a wiſe and liberal ſyſtem of policy was embraced, I doubt not but a trade to the Coaſt of Africa, far more extenſive and beneficial than the preſent, might be eſtabliſhed, on a much more ſolid and permanent foundation. But theſe are ſpeculations into which I forbear to enter. Upon the whole, however, we may with confidence affirm, that regulations for the purpoſe of obviating the political inconveniencies which might reſult from the abolition of the Slave Trade, would do honour to the moſt enlightened Legiſlature; but a feeble attempt to ſatisfy the demands of honour and conſcience, by any pretended regulations, for the mere purpoſe of preventing or of rectifying the abuſes of that trade, which is itſelf the moſt flagrant of all abuſes which the annals of the world exhibit, would diſgrace the underſtandings, and detract from the dignity, even of a Convention of Hottentots.

ESSAY XXIV.

On the NATIONAL DEBT.

AT the æra of the Revolution no National Debt exiſted; *i. e.* no Debt borrowed on parliamentary ſecurity, for diſcharging the intereſt of which national taxes were impoſed and mortgaged. It is one of the moſt aſtoniſhing facts in all the records of hiſtory, that in the century which has elapſed ſince that memorable event, a Debt has been contracted by the Government of this country, which cannot be eſtimated at leſs than two hundred and fifty millions ſterling; a ſum ſo vaſt, that it probably exceeds the whole aggregate value of the precious metals actually in circulation throughout all the kingdoms of the globe. A political phænomenon ſo extraordinary, could not fail to excite the attention, and employ the ſagacity, of the ableſt ſtateſmen and philoſophers, cloſely connected as it is with conſiderations of the utmoſt importance to the welfare, and even the exiſtence of the State. In oppoſition, however, to the moſt confident predictions, and, indeed, contrary to every apparently reaſon-

able ground of expectation, we find by experience, that the kingdom is not only capable of ſuſtaining the preſſure of this immenſe load, but that it exhibits plain indications of internal vigour, and even of increaſing wealth and proſperity. That there is a point, however, beyond which the accumulation of the Public Debt muſt prove deſtructive and fatal, cannot be doubted; and to this general conviction we owe the late inſtitution of a permanent fund for its gradual redemption.

It is well known, that in the year 1716 Sir Robert Walpole eſtabliſhed a fund, diſtinguiſhed by the appellation of the Sinking Fund, which was appropriated, under the authority of Parliament, to the ſole purpoſe of redeeming the National Debt, at that time amounting to about fifty millions. This Fund was formed by the reduction of the legal rate of intereſt, from ſix to five *per cent.* aided by various ſurpluſſes, ariſing from the different duties and taxes impoſed for the payment of the intereſts of particular loans. It is evident that a fund ſo conſtituted, if faithfully and invariably applied to its original deſtination, muſt be not only a fund continually increaſing, but a fund increaſing with a perpetually accelerated rapidity; for not only the intereſts of the ſums annually diſcharged by the original fund were to be regularly added to it, but the intereſts of the ſums diſcharged by thoſe intereſts, and ſo on in progreſſion, *ad infinitum*; or, in other words, the original fund was a fund continually improving

proving at compound intereſt; and as the public Debt at that period bore an intereſt of five *per cent.* a very ſlight knowledge of figures will ſuffice to prove, that at the termination of a period of about fourteen years, the fund would be able to diſengage annuities equal to its own amount. Eſtimating, therefore, the original fund at one million, at the end of fifty-ſix years it would be increaſed to no leſs than ſixteen millions; that is to ſay, three hundred millions of Debt, bearing five *per cent.* intereſt would, at the expiration of this term, be totally extinguiſhed. This is, indeed, amazing; but, as it admits of an eaſy demonſtration, it cannot, at leaſt it certainly ought not, to incur the reproach ſo often caſt on the airy dreams of ſpeculative politicians. The radical idea of this plan of redemption is, it muſt be owned, ſo obvious and ſimple, that it is very eaſily conceivable even the Miniſter who eſtabliſhed it might not himſelf be fully ſenſible of its latent energies. When we conſider, however, the great abilities of Sir Robert Walpole as a Financier, and his extenſive political knowledge, as well as the very able and maſterly manner in which the nature and powers of this fund were explained and defended by the miniſterial advocates and writers of that time, it can ſcarcely be imagined that Sir Robert Walpole was himſelf the dupe of thoſe deſpicable arguments, by which the Houſe of Commons was induced by him to conſent to the total alienation of the Sinking

Fund, in a very few years after its firſt eſtabliſhment. The true motives which influenced the conduct of that Miniſter, therefore, it may be preſumed, were the deſire of avoiding the odium of impoſing new taxes, in order to provide for current ſervices during a time of profound peace, and a ſecret reluctance in the Court, to leſſen the political influence and ſecurity which the reigning family was ſuppoſed, not without reaſon, to derive from the exiſtence of a public Debt of ſuch magnitude. For almoſt half a century after the practice of alienation commenced, the attempts made to reſtore the Sinking Fund to its original ſtate, were few and feeble; and, at length, notwithſtanding the prodigious increaſe of the National Debt, in conſequence of the wars terminated by the treaties of Aix la Chapelle and Fontainebleau, all ideas of its nature and efficacy appeared to be totally loſt; and the whole nation, abſorbed in conteſts as diſgraceful to its reputation as injurious to its intereſts, poſſeſſed neither leiſure nor inclination to direct its views to an object, in compariſon of which the political controverſies of the day appear egregiouſly trifling and ridiculous. At length, however, about the year 1772, a private clergyman, not of the eſtabliſhment, once more awakened the attention of the reflecting and intelligent part of the community, by a moſt animated and maſterly "Appeal to "the Public on the Subject of the National "Debt;" but though it was ſcarcely poſſible, by any exertion

exertion of human ability, to diſplay the ruinous tendency of the meaſures actually purſued, or the advantages attending the reſtoration of the original plan of Sir Robert Walpole, in a more ſtriking or convincing point of view, it did not immediately produce any very ſenſible effect. Every diſcuſſion relative to the management of the finances, was ſuppoſed, by the generality of perſons, to be involved in darkneſs and myſtery; and the noble Lord then at the helm of government, and in the zenith of his power and reputation, affected to conſider the mathematical demonſtrations of Dr. Price, as the ingenious but Utopian ſpeculations of a viſionary writer; and not a ſingle advance was made by Lord North, in the whole courſe of an adminiſtration of near thirteen years, towards the re-eſtabliſhment of the great and neceſſary plan of a permanent redemption. On the contrary, after the war with America commenced, the annual loans were invariably and avowedly negociated on the dangerous and deſperate principle, that redemption was wholly impracticable; and in conformity to this maxim, in order to effect a trifling ſaving in the article of intereſt, that Miniſter ſcrupled not to create an enormous addition of ſuperfluous capital. In the year 1781, for inſtance, twelve millions were borrowed, for which the public paid preciſely five and an half *per cent.* intereſt. Had a capital been created of twelve millions, at five *per cent.* and an annuity granted for a limited term, by way of premium, it is

evident, that whenever the Debt came into a regular courſe of redemption, no more would be paid by the public than was actually received; and that the high rate of intereſt would alſo greatly accelerate the progreſs of redemption: but the plan actually adopted by his Lordſhip, was to grant for every hundred pounds ſubſcribed, one hundred and fifty pounds three *per cent.* and twenty-five pounds four *per cent.* capital ſtock; ſo that a new capital of twenty-one millions was created, when twelve millions only were actually paid into the Exchequer. Suppoſing the three *per cents.* therefore, in the courſe of redemption, to riſe to par, and under the adminiſtration of Mr. Pelham they roſe conſiderably above par, a premium of nine millions muſt be paid by the public for the loan of twelve. That a Britiſh Miniſter ſhould be found raſh and unadviſed enough to propoſe ſo extravagant and monſtrous a plan, or that a Britiſh Houſe of Commons ſhould be induced, *by any arguments whatever*, to give it the ſanction of their approbation, muſt equally excite our aſtoniſhment and indignation. Happily for the nation, and, indeed, for the world in general, a change of adminiſtration ſoon ſucceeded, and after a ſhort interval, Mr. Pitt was placed at the head of the finances; and I moſt willingly join in the general plaudit, which the integrity and ability diſplayed by him in the management of them, have ſo juſtly excited. In the year 1786, he had the merit of forming a plan which

which ſoon paſſed into a law, for appropriating one million annually to the redemption of the Public Debt. The plan of Mr. Pitt, is, indeed, radically and eſſentially, the ſame with that firſt projected by Sir Robert Walpole, and revived by Dr. Price. In ſome important circumſtances, however, it differs, and, I think, appears to much advantage in the compariſon. In the firſt place, the money appropriated to the purpoſe of redemption, is regularly iſſued from the Exchequer, at ſtated times, and conſigned to the management of Commiſſioners, who are obliged by law, upon the uſual transfer days, to employ it in the purchaſe of ſtock, agreeably to certain rules of proportion eſtabliſhed by the Act. Thus the Houſe of Commons hath, as it were, erected a barrier againſt its own encroachments. The money once paid into the hands of the Commiſſioners, becomes a kind of ſacred depoſit; and though the Legiſlature may, doubtleſs, by a new Act, diſcontinue the payments from the Exchequer, or even compel the Commiſſioners to refund or alienate what has been already appropriated, yet this would be an effort of political violence, which could not fail to excite a very general alarm, and a very powerful oppoſition; and a Miniſter who would not ſcruple to propoſe an alienation of a ſum, ſuch as the public exigencies might happen to require, of which he had himſelf the cuſtody, and which preſented every moment the moſt tempting opportunities of ſeizure, would find himſelf in very different

different circumſtances when the transfer had been actually made; and his purpoſe could not be effected, unleſs a fund, ſolemnly appropriated to a ſervice of the higheſt importance, were openly and publicly plundered.

Another capital improvement of the original plan, conſiſts in the power veſted in the Commiſſioners to advance money, during war, by way of loan, on intereſt to the Government. This regulation, propoſed by Mr. Fox, is attended with a double advantage—as it obviates the principal inducement to alienate the Sinking Fund, ariſing from an urgent neceſſity for a ſupply of money, during a ſeaſon of public danger and diſtreſs; and as it muſt have a powerful tendency to reſtrain the rate of intereſt on public loans within moderate and reaſonable bounds. Various other particulars, though of inferior importance, might be ſpecified, in which the plan of Mr. Pitt may juſtly claim a degree of merit ſuperior to that of his predeceſſor. Notwithſtanding, however, the very general approbation with which it was received, a moſt vehement attack was immediately made upon it, from a quarter whence ſo rude an aſſault could ſcarcely have been apprehended. The preſent Earl Stanhope, a nobleman nearly allied to, and cloſely connected with, Mr. Pitt, on this occaſion entered the liſts againſt the Miniſter, armed "*cap a pie*," defying him, "*a l'outrance*," with the louring brow and menacing air of a fierce and implacable combatant. Happily, being myſelf placed beyond the reach of the "whiff and

"wind"

" wind" of his Lordſhip's fell ſword, I am the better enabled to obſerve and report the aſtoniſhing feats atchieved by this noble champion. Raillery apart, it muſt be owned that his Lordſhip's firſt charge ſeems intended as a mere flouriſh, viz. That the Commiſſioners may, by means of the powers given them by this Bill, make large fortunes by gambling in the Public Funds. " As the Commiſſioners," argues Lord Stanhope " muſt certainly know in which of the " Public Funds they mean to lay out the *free* " *revenue*, they may previouſly employ ſecret " and unſuſpected Agents, to purchaſe as largely " as they think proper into that ſtock, which will " neceſſarily be raiſed by the conſequent appro- " priation of the Public Money." But his Lordſhip ſeems not to recollect, that by this Bill the Commiſſioners are obliged to bring the Public Money to the Public Market in regular and equal portions; therefore no ſudden riſe can ever take place in any particular ſtock, in conſequence of any vaſt or unexpected purchaſe; and as to the gradual riſe which will doubtleſs be the neceſſary conſequence of the gradual purchaſes of the Commiſſioners, it is evident, that if the whole produce of the Sinking Fund was applied to the redemption of any particular ſtock, the riſe of every other ſtock would maintain an exact proportion to the riſe of the ſtock ſo redeemed; as from obvious cauſes, the different Public Funds have always preſerved, and muſt ever continue to preſerve,

preſerve, one common level. Diſmiſſing this objection, therefore, as trifling and captious, let us proceed to the ſecond, which we ſhall find more deſerving of our attention, viz. That this plan does not propoſe any converſion of ſtock. "This "plan," ſays his Lordſhip, "is ſo contrived, "that an enormous and unneceſſary expence will "be incurred by the public, in the redemption "of the preſent three *per cents.* which alone "form a capital of one hundred and eighty-ſix "millions."

Lord Stanhope here profeſſedly grounds his reaſonings upon the probability that the three *per cents.* will not be redeemed at an average lower than ninety. This, as a matter of probable conjecture, and as a ſufficient baſis of argument, where certainty is unattainable, may, I think, be fairly admitted; and, in this caſe, the advantage of a general converſion of the three *per cents.* into four *per cents.* is manifeſt. If a hundred millions of three *per cents.* redeemable at ninety, could be converted into ſeventy-five millions of four *per cents.* redeemable at par, it is evident, that the ſum of fifteen millions would be ſaved to the public. This plan of converſion was firſt propoſed by Dr. Price, to the preſent Marquis of Lanſdowne, when Earl of Shelburne, and at the head of the Treaſury. It obtained the approbation of that Nobleman, who meant, had he continued in office, to have combined it with the plan formed for raiſing the loan for the ſervice of the

year

year 1783. It is, however, liable to a very ſerious objection, viz. that the Stockholders will require ſo large a premium to induce them to convert, that the ſum neceſſary to accompliſh the converſion, might be applied with more effect to the purpoſe of immediate redemption. That this aſſertion, however, cannot reſt on any abſolute grounds of certainty, is evident; becauſe, in order to aſcertain the advantage reſulting from ſuch converſion, the average rate of redemption muſt be previouſly known. From a general inſpection of the preſent transfer prices, it appears, that the ſum of two millions five hundred thouſand pounds, would be neceſſary to effect a converſion of one hundred millions of three *per cents.* into ſeventy-five millions of four *per cents.* Here then ariſes the queſtion, whether it would be moſt beneficial to the public, to employ this ſum in the redemption of ſtock, or in the converſion of it. An annual fund of one million, employed in the redemption of ſeventy-five millions of four *per cents.* would liquidate the whole Debt in thirty-ſix years; but the ſame annual fund, aided by the ſum of two millions and an half, applied to the immediate purpoſe of redemption, in preference to converſion, in the ſpace of thirty-ſix years would diſcharge only eighty-eight millions of three *per cents.* allowing ninety to be the average rate of redemption. A loſs of twelve millions, therefore, would, at the end of that period, be ſuſtained by the public, in conſequence of applying the ſum of

of two millions and an half to the purpoſe of redemption, rather than of converſion. The truth, however, is, that it is not, in the remoteſt degree, probable the groſs ſum of two millions five hundred thouſand pounds will ever be applied either in the one way or the other. But a practicable plan, doubtleſs, might be formed, by which a gradual progreſs might be made in the proceſs of converſion; and as the principal cauſe of the comparative depreciation of the four *per cents.* is the apprehenſion of a reduction of intereſt, or a redemption at par, the value of the new four *per cents.* might be conſiderably raiſed, and conſequently the expence attending the converſion conſiderably leſſened, by enacting, that the new capital ſhould neither be redeemable, nor the intereſt reducible, till the old four *per cents.* were previouſly and entirely liquidated. Lord Stanhope, indeed, propoſes a plan, according to which a general converſion of ſtock would, as he pretends, take place, without ſubjecting the public to any extra expence. If ſo, the public are certainly under very great obligation to the noble Lord; but I apprehend that few words will ſuffice to expoſe the futility of his Lordſhip's pompous project. The inducement which Lord Stanhope holds out to the Proprietor of Stock, in lieu of a premium, to engage him to convert, is *the right of priority of redemption*, and the ſinking fund is to be inviolably applied to the purpoſe of redeeming the new four *per cents.* at par, according to the order

order of time in which the converſion ſhall have been made. It is moſt certain, therefore, that as long as the three *per cents.* remain below ſeventy-five, the Stockholders, who have intereſt ſufficient to procure early ſubſcriptions, would need neither arguments nor menaces, laviſh as his Lordſhip is of both, to induce them to convert. But it is, at the ſame time, juſt as certain, that a loſs would be ſuſtained by the public, exactly equivalent to the difference between the actual transfer price of the ſtock ſo converted, and the ſum at which it is to be redeemed. But, if the three per cents. ſhould riſe above ſeventy-five, not all the eloquence of Demoſthenes, or Cicero, would prevail upon a ſingle Stockholder, obſtinate and inſenſible as they are, to convert his three *per cents.* into four *per cents.* unleſs a *bonus* was ſecured to him equal, at leaſt, to the difference between the market price and the price of redemption. A *bonus* the noble Lord himſelf allows to be, in theſe circumſtances, indiſpenſably neceſſary; and, as priority of redemption is the grand allurement held out by this plan, the *bonus* muſt of courſe correſpond, or keep pace, with the advance of the original ſtock. If ninety, therefore, be, as his Lordſhip ſuppoſes, the average rate of redemption of the original ſtock, it follows, that a *bonus* of fifteen millions will be neceſſary, in order to procure a converſion of one hundred millions of three *per cents.* into ſeventy-five millions of four *per cents.* or, in other words, the converſion would be

be merely nominal, and the ſame ſum would operate exactly in the ſame manner, if applied to the redemption of the three *per cents.* under their original denomination. His Lordſhip's project is, therefore, in part, abſurd and extravagant, and, in part, nugatory and ridiculous.

The third objection urged by Lord Stanhope, againſt the plan eſtabliſhed by Mr. Pitt, is, that no effectual means are provided to prevent an alienation of the fund from the purpoſe of redemption. Now I acknowledge, and I have already mentioned it as one of the advantages attending Mr. Pitt's plan, that the moſt effectual means are, in my apprehenſion, provided, which human wiſdom can deviſe, to prevent any ſuch alienation. If Lord Stanhope can point out any means more effectual, the public would certainly deem themſelves ſtill more indebted to him, than even for his incomparable ſcheme for the converſion of ſtock, free of all expence. The means actually propoſed by his Lordſhip, are, however, totally inadequate to the purpoſe. It muſt be confeſſed, indeed, that ſo far as his Lordſhip's plan participates of the nature of a contract, it would not be conſidered by Parliament as alterable, but with the concurrence of all the parties concerned; and, it is evident, that ſo long as the three *per cents.* ſhould continue below ſeventy-five, the conſent of thoſe Proprietors of the new four *per cents.* who were in expectation of a ſpeedy redemption, could not be obtained. If any ſerious intention of alienation, there-

therefore, was entertained, a ſtop muſt previouſly be put to the proceſs of converſion, which could never be anticipated to any great degree, but under circumſtances of enormous diſadvantage to the public. But, whenever the three *per cents.* roſe above ſeventy-five, the proceſs of converſion would ceaſe of itſelf, unleſs the public voluntarily offered a *bonus*, as an inducement to convert, which might be continued or with-held at pleaſure. It is plain, therefore, that the Sinking Fund could never be incapable of alienation for any conſiderable period of time; and for ſuch time only as it was employed in operations of finance, peculiarly pernicious, extravagant and abſurd. As Miniſters of State are often ſeverely cenſured without reaſon, it is both right and pleaſing to commend, when their public conduct has been really meritorious; and I feel myſelf the more diſpoſed to beſtow that tribute of applauſe which Mr. Pitt, in the capacity of Miniſter of Finance, is ſo juſtly entitled to claim, as it appears highly probable that he is now at the eve of a reſignation of his high offices *. I cannot, however, avoid remarking, that the learned and excellent man, who firſt awakened the attention of the nation to this intereſting and important ſubject; the man, whoſe ideas Mr. Pitt appears chiefly to have adopted and acted upon; the man, who ſo ably and clearly explained the nature and powers of

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